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THE
WORKS
OF THE
ENGLISH POETS.

WITH
P R E F A C E S,
BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,
BY SAMUEL JOHNSON.

VOLUME THE THIRTY-EIGHTH.

L O N D O N:

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M D C C L X X I X.



P O P E'S
H O M E R.

THE ODYSSEY.

VOLUME II.



ARGUMENT.

THE ARRIVAL OF ULYSSES IN ITHACA.

ULYSSES takes his leave of Alcious and Antis, and embarks in the evening. Next morning the ship arrives at Ithaca, and the sailors, as Ulysses is yet sleeping, lay him in the house with all his treasures. On their return, they find their master knows not the native Ithaca, any more than a stranger which Palas had sent him. He breaks into loud lamentations; and the goddess, appearing to him in the form of a shepherd, restores the country to him, and points out the palace of his father. He tells the story of his adventures, and they console him upon which the manly hero, and they console together of the suitors to be taken to destroy the suitors. To conceal his return, and disguise his person the more effectually, the changes him into the figure of an old beggar.



ARGUMENT.

THE ARRIVAL OF ULYSSES IN ITHACA.

ULYSSES takes his leave of Alcinous and Arete, and embarks in the evening. Next morning the ship arrives at Ithaca; where the sailors, as Ulysses is yet sleeping, lay him on the shore with all his treasures. On their return, Neptune changes their ship into a rock. In the mean time Ulysses, awaking, knows not his native Ithaca, by reason of a mist which Pallas had cast round him. He breaks into loud lamentations; till the Goddess, appearing to him in the form of a shepherd, discovers the country to him, and points out the particular places. He then tells a feigned story of his adventures, upon which she manifests herself, and they consult together of the measures to be taken to destroy the suitors. To conceal his return, and disguise his person the more effectually, she changes him into the figure of an old beggar.



THE

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIII.

HE ceas'd ; but left so pleasing on their ear
 His voice, that listening still they seem'd to hear.
 A pause, of silence hush'd the shady rooms :
 The grateful conference then the king resumes :

Whatever toils the great Ulysses past, 5
 Beneath this happy roof they end at last ;
 No longer now from shore to shore to roam,
 Smooth seas and gentle winds invite him home.
 But hear me, princes ! whom these walls inclose,
 For whom my chanter sings, and goblet flows 10
 With wines unmix'd (an honour due to age,
 To cheer the grave, and warm the poet's rage) ;
 Though labour'd gold and many a dazzling vest
 Lie heap'd already for our god-like guest ;
 Without new treasures let him not remove, 15
 Large, and expressive of the public love :
 Each peer a tripod, each a vase bestow,
 A general tribute, which the state shall owe.

This sentence pleas'd : then all their steps address
 To separate mansions, and retir'd to rest. 20
 Now did the rosy-finger'd morn arise,
 And shed her sacred light along the skies.

4 P O P E ' S H O M E R .

Down to the haven and the ships in haste
 They bore the treasures, and in safety plac'd.
 The king himself the vases rang'd with care : 25
 Then badé his followers to the feast repair.
 A victim ox beneath the sacred hand
 Of great Alcinous falls, and stains the sand.
 To Jove th' Eternal (Power above all Powers !
 Who wings the winds, and darkens Heaven with
 showers) 30

The flames ascend : till evening they prolong
 Thy rites, more sacred made by heavenly song :
 For in the midst, with public honours grac'd,
 The lyre divine, Demodocus ! was plac'd ;
 All, but Ulysses, heard with fix'd delight : 35
 He sate, and ey'd the sun, and wish'd the night ;
 Slow seem'd the sun to move, the hours to roll,
 His native home deep-imag'd in his soul.
 As the tir'd ploughman spent with stubborn toil,
 Whose oxen long have torn the furrow'd soil, 40
 Sees with delight the sun's declining ray,
 When home with feeble knees he bends his way
 To late repast (the day's hard labour done) :
 So to Ulysses welcome set the sun.

Then instant to Alcinous and the rest 45
 (The Scherian states) he turn'd, and thus address :
 O thou, the first in merit and command !
 And you the peers and princes of the land !
 May every joy be yours ! nor this the least,
 When due libation shall have crown'd the feast, }
 Safe to my home to send your happy guest.

Complete

Complete are now the bounties you have given,
Be all those bounties but confirm'd by Heaven!
So may I find, when all my wanderings cease,
My comfort blameless, and my friends in peace. 55

On you be every bliss; and every day,
In home-felt joys delighted, roll away:
Yourself, your wives, your long-descending race,
May every God enrich with every grace!
Sure fix'd on virtue may your nation stand, 60
And public evil never touch the land!

His words, well weigh'd, the general voice approv'd
Benign, and instant his dismissal mov'd.

The monarch to Pontonous gave the sign,
To fill the goblet high with rosy wine: 65
Great Jove the Father first (he cried) implore;
Then send the stranger to his native shore.

The luscious wine th' obedient herald brought;
Around the mansion flow'd the purple draught:
Each from his seat to each immortal pours, 70
Whom glory circles in th' Olympian bowers.
Ulysses sole with air majestic stands;
The bowl presenting to Arete's hands;
Then thus: O Queen, farewell! be still possess
Of dear remembrance, blessing still and blest! 75
Till age and death shall gently call thee hence
(Sure fate of every mortal excellence!)
Farewell! and joys successive ever spring
To thee, to thine, the people, and the king!

Thus he; then parting prints the sandy shore: 80
To the fair port: a herald march'd before,

Sent by Alcinous; of Arete's train
 Three chosen maids attend him to the main;
 This does a tunick and white vest convey,
 A various casket that, of rich inlay, 85
 And bread and wine the third. The chearful mates
 Safe in the hollow poop dispose the cates:
 Upon the deck soft painted robes they spread,
 With linen cover'd for the hero's bed.
 He climb'd the lofty stern! then gently prest 90
 The swelling couch, and lay compos'd to rest.

Now plac'd in order, the Phæacian train
 Their cables loose, and launch into the main:
 At once they bend, and strike their equal oars,
 And leave the sinking hills and lessening shores. 95
 While on the deck the chief in silence lies,
 And pleasing slumbers steal upon his eyes.
 As fiery coursers in the rapid race
 Urg'd by fierce drivers through the dusty space,
 Toss their high heads, and scour along the plain; 100
 So mounts the bounding vessel o'er the main.
 Back to the stern the parted billows flow,
 And the black ocean foams and roars below.

Thus with spread sails the winged galley flies;
 Less swift an eagle cuts the liquid skies; 105
 Divine Ulysses was her sacred load,
 A man, in wisdom equal to a God!
 Much danger, long and mighty toils, he bore,
 In storms by sea, and combats on the shore:
 All which soft sleep now banish'd from his breast,
 Wrapt in a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest.

But

But when the morning star with early ray
 Flam'd in the front of heaven, and promis'd day;
 Like distant clouds the mariner descries
 Fair Ithaca's emerging hills arise. 115
 Far from the town a spacious port appears,
 Sacred to Phorcys' power, whose name it bears:
 Two craggy rocks projecting to the main,
 The roaring wind's tempestuous rage restrain;
 Within, the waves in softer murmurs glide, 120
 And ships secure without their halbers ride,
 High at the head a branching olive grows,
 And crowns the pointed cliffs with shady boughs.
 Beneath, a gloomy grotto's cool recess
 Delights the Nereids of the neighbouring seas, 125
 Where bowls and urns were form'd of living stone,
 And massy beams in native marble shone;
 On which the labours of the nymph were roll'd,
 Their webs divine of purple mix'd with gold.
 Within the cave the clustering bees attend 130
 Their waxen works, or from the roof depend.
 Perpetual waters o'er the pavement glide;
 Two marble doors unfold on either side;
 Sacred the south, by which the Gods descend;
 But mortals enter at the northern end. 135

Thither they bent, and haul'd their ship to land;
 (The crooked keel divides the yellow sand);
 Ulysses sleeping on his couch they bore,
 And gently plac'd him on the rocky shore.
 His treasures next, Alcinous' gifts, they laid 140
 In the wild olive's unfrequented shade,

Secure from theft : then launch'd the bark again,
 Resum'd their oars, and measur'd back the main,
 Nor yet forgot old Ocean's dread Supreme
 The vengeance vow'd for eyeless Polypheme. 143
 Before the throne of mighty Jove he stood ;
 And sought the secret counsels of the God :

Shall then no more, O Sire of Gods, be mine
 The rights and honours of a Power divine ?
 Scorn'd ev'n by man, and (oh ! severe disgrace !) 150
 By soft Phæacians, my degenerate race !
 Against yon destin'd head in vain I swore,
 And menac'd vengeance, ere he reach'd his shore ;
 To reach his natal shore was thy decree ;
 Mild I obey'd, for who shall war with thee ? 155
 Behold him landed, careless and asleep,
 From all th' eluded dangers of the deep !
 Lo ! where he lies, amidst a shining store
 Of brass, rich garments, and refulgent ore :
 And bears triumphant to his native isle 160
 A prize more worth than Ilion's noble spoil.

To whom the Father of th' immortal Powers,
 Who swells the clouds, and gladdens earth with showers ;
 Can mighty Neptune thus of man complain !
 Neptune, tremendous o'er the boundless main ! 165
 Rever'd and awful ev'n in heaven's abodes,
 Ancient and great ! a God above the Gods !
 If that low race offend thy power divine,
 (Weak, daring creatures !) is not vengeance thine ?
 Go then, the guilty at thy will chastise. 170
 He said : the Shaker of the earth replies :

This

This then I deem; to fix the gallant ship
A mark of vengeance on the sable deep:
To warn the thoughtless self-confiding train,
No more unlicens'd thus to brave the main.
Full in their port a shady hill shall rise,
If such thy will.—We will it, Jove replies:
Ev'n when, with transport blackening all the strand,
The swarming people hail their ship to land,
Fix her for ever, a memorial stone:
Still let her seem to sail, and seem alone;
The trembling crouds shall see the sudden shade
Of whelming mountains overhang their head!

With that the God, whose earthquakes rock the
ground,
Fierce to Phæacia cross'd the vast profound.
Swift as a swallow sweeps the liquid way,
The winged pinnace shot along the sea.
The God arrests her with a sudden stroke,
And roots her down an everlasting rock.
Aghast the Scherians stand in deep surprize;
All press to speak, all question with their eyes.
What hands unseen the rapid bark restrain!
And yet it swims, or seems to swim, the main!
Thus they, unconscious of the deed divine:
Till great Alcinous rising own'd the sign.

Behold the long predestin'd day! (he cries)
Oh! certain faith of antient prophecies!
These ears have heard my royal fire disclose
A dreadful story, big with future woes;
How mov'd with wrath, that careless we convey
Promiscuous every guest to every bay,

Stern

Stern Neptune rag'd; and how by his command
 Firm rooted in the surge a ship should stand
 (A monument of wrath); and mound on mound
 Should hide our walls, or overwhelm beneath the ground.

The Fates have follow'd as declar'd the fear.

Be humbled, nations! and your monarch hear.

No more unlicens'd brave the deeps, no more

With every stranger pass from shore to shore;

On angry Neptune now for mercy call:

210

To his high name let twelve black oxen fall.

So may the God reverse his purpos'd will,

Nor o'er our city hang the dreadful hill.

The monarch spoke: they trembled and obey'd,

Forth on the sands the victim oxen led:

215

The gather'd tribes before the altars stand,

And chiefs and rulers, a majestic band.

The King of Ocean all the tribes implore;

The blazing altars redden all the shore.

Meanwhile Ulysses in his country lay,

Releas'd from sleep, and round him might survey

The solitary shore and rolling sea.

Yet had his mind through tedious absence lost

The dear remembrance of his native coast;

Besides, Minerva, to secure her care,

225

Diffus'd around a veil of thicken'd air:

For so the Gods ordain'd, to keep unseen

His royal person from his friends and queen;

Till the proud suitors for their crimes afford

An ample vengeance to their injur'd lord.

230

Now all the land another prospect bore,

Another port appear'd, another shore,

And

And long-continued ways, and winding floods,
And unknown mountains, crown'd with unknown
woods.

Pensive and slow with sudden grief oppress'd. 235

The king arose, and beat his careful breast,

Cast a long look o'er all the coast and main,

And fought, around, his native realm in vain:

Then with erected eyes stood fix'd in woe,

And, as he spoke, the tears began to flow: 240

Ye Gods! he cry'd, upon what barren coast,

In what new region, is Ulysses tost?

Possess'd by wild barbarians, fierce in arms?

Or men whose bosom tender pity warms?

Where shall this treasure now in safety lie? 245

And whither, whither, its sad owner fly?

Ah! why did I Alcinous' grace implore?

Ah! why forsake Phæacia's happy shore?

Some juster prince perhaps had entertain'd,

And safe restor'd me to my native land. 250

Is this the promis'd long-expected coast,

And this the faith Phæacia's rulers boast?

O righteous Gods! of all the great how few

Are just to Heaven, and to their promise true!

But he, the Power to whose all-seeing eyes 255

The deeds of men appear without disguise,

'Tis his alone t' avenge the wrongs I bear:

For still th' oppress'd are his peculiar care.

To count these presents, and from thence to prove

Their faith, is mine: the rest belongs to Jove.

Then on the sands he rang'd his wealthy store,

The gold, the vests, the tripods, number'd o'er:

All

All these he found, but still in error lost
 Disconsolate he wanders on the coast,
 Sighs for his country, and laments again 265
 To the deaf rocks, and hoarse-resounding main.
 When, lo! the guardian Goddess of the wise,
 Celestial Pallas, stood before his eyes;
 In show a youthful swain, of form divine,
 Who seem'd descended from some princely line, 270
 A graceful robe her slender body drest,
 Around her shoulders flew the waving vest,
 Her decent hand a shining javelin bore,
 And painted sandals on her feet she wore.
 To whom the king: Whoe'er of human race 275
 Thou art, that wander'st in this desert place!
 With joy to thee, as to some God, I bend,
 To thee my treasures and myself commend,
 Oh! tell a wretch in exile doom'd to stray,
 What air I breathe, what country I survey? 280
 The fruitful continent's extremest bound,
 Or some fair isle which Neptune's arms surround!
 From what fair clime (said she) remote from fame,
 Arriv'st thou here a stranger to our name?
 Thou seest an island, not to those unknown 285
 Whose hills are brighten'd by the rising sun,
 Nor those that plac'd beneath his utmost reign
 Behold him sinking in the western main.
 The rugged soil allows no level space
 For flying chariots, or the rapid race; 290
 Yet, not ungrateful to the peasant's pain,
 Suffices fulness to the swelling grain:

The

The loaded trees their various fruits produce,
 And clustering grapes afford a generous juice:
 Woods crown our mountains, and in every grove 295
 The bounding goats and frisking heifers rove:
 Soft rains and kindly dews refresh the field,
 And rising springs eternal verdure yield.

Ev'n to those shores is Ithaca renown'd,
 Where Troy's majestic ruins strow the ground. 300

At this the chief with transport was possess'd,
 His panting heart heart exulting in his breast:
 Yet, well dissembling his untimely joys,
 And veiling truth in plausible disguise,
 Thus, with an air sincere, in fiction bold, 305
 His ready tale th' inventive hero told:

Oft have I heard in Crete this island's name;
 For 'twas from Crete my native soil I came,
 Self-banish'd thence. I sail'd before the wind,
 And left my children and my friends behind. 310
 From fierce Idomeneus' revenge I flew,
 Whose son, the swift Orsilochus, I flew,
 (With brutal force he seiz'd my Trojan prey,
 Due to the toils of many a bloody day).

Unseen I 'scap'd; and, favour'd by the night, 315
 In a Phœnician vessel took my flight,
 For Pyle or Elis bound: but tempests tost
 And raging billows drove us on your coast.
 In dead of night an unknown port we gain'd,
 Spent with fatigue, and slept secure on land, 320
 But here the rosy morn renew'd the day,
 While in th' embrace of pleasing sleep I lay,

Sudden

Sudden, invited by auspicious gales,
 They land my goods, and hoist their flying sails.
 Abandon'd here, my fortune I deplore, 325
 A hapless exile on a foreign shore.

Thus while he spoke, the blue-ey'd Maid began
 With pleasing smiles to view the god-like man:
 Then chang'd her form: and now, divinely bright,
 Jove's heavenly daughter stood confess'd to sight; 330
 Like a fair virgin in her beauty's bloom,
 Skill'd in th' illustrious labours of the loom.

Oh, still the same Ulysses! she rejoin'd,
 In useful craft successfully refin'd!
 Artful in speech, in action, and in mind!
 Suffic'd it not, that, thy long labours past,
 Secure thou seest thy native shore at last?
 But this to me? who, like thyself, excel
 In arts of counsel, and dissembling well;
 To me, whose wit exceeds the powers divine, 340
 No less than mortals are surpass'd by thine.
 Know'st thou not me? who made thy life my care,
 Through ten years wandering, and through ten years war:
 Who taught thee arts, Alcinous to persuade,
 To raise his wonder, and engage his aid: 345
 And now appear thy treasures to protect,
 Conceal thy person, thy designs direct,
 And tell what more thou must from Fate expect.
 Domestic woes far heavier to be borne!
 The pride of fools, and slaves' insulting scorn. 350
 But thou be silent, nor reveal thy state;
 Yield to the force of unresisted fate,

And

And bear unmov'd the wrongs of base mankind,
The last, and hardest, conquest of the mind.

Goddeſs of Wiſdom ! Ithacus replies,
He who diſcerns thee muſt be truly wiſe,
So ſeldom view'd, and ever in diſguiſe !
When the bold Argives led their warring powers,
Againſt proud Ilion's well-defended towers ;

Ulyſſes was thy care, celeftial Maid ! 360

Grac'd with thy ſight, and favour'd with thy aid.
But when the Trojan piles in aſhes lay,
And bound for Greece we plough'd the watery way ;

Our fleet diſpers'd and driven from coaſt to coaſt,
Thy ſacred preſence from that hour I loſt : 365

Till I beheld thy radiant form once more,
And heard thy counſels on Phæacia's ſhore.

But, by th' almighty author of thy race,
Tell me, oh tell ! is this my native place ?

For much I fear, long tracts of land and ſea 370

Divide this coaſt from diſtant Ithaca ;

The ſweet deluſion kindly you impoſe,
To ſoothe my hopes, and mitigate my woes.

Thus he, The blue-ey'd Goddeſs thus replies :

How prone to doubt, how cautious, are the wiſe !

Who, yers'd in fortune, fear the flattering ſhow,

And taſte not half the bliſs the Gods beſtow.

The more ſhall Pallas aid thy juſt deſires,

And guard the wiſdom which herſelf inſpires.

Others, long abſent from their native place,

Straight ſeek their home, and fly with eager pace

To their wives' arms, and children's dear embrace. }

Not thus Ulysses : he decrees to prove
 His subjects' faith, and queen's suspected love ;
 Who mourn'd her lord twice ten revolving years, 385
 And wastes the days in grief, the nights in tears.
 But Pallas knew (thy friends and navy lost)
 Once more 'twas given thee to behold thy coast :
 Yet how could I with adverse Fate engage,
 And mighty Neptune's unrelenting rage? 390
 Now lift thy longing eyes, while I restore
 The pleasing prospect of thy native shore :
 Behold the port of Phorcys ! fenc'd around
 With rocky mountains, and with olives crown'd.
 Behold the gloomy grot ! whose cool recess 395
 Delights the Nereids of the neighbouring seas :
 Whose now neglected altars in thy reign
 Blush'd with the blood of sheep and oxen slain,
 Behold ! where Neritus the clouds divides,
 And shakes the waving forests on his sides. 400
 So spake the Goddess ; and the prospect clear'd,
 The mists dispers'd, and all the coast appear'd.
 The king with joy confess'd his place of birth,
 And on his knees salutes his mother earth :
 Then, with his suppliant hands upheld in air, 405
 Thus to the sea-green Sisters sends his prayer :
 All hail ! ye virgin-daughters of the main !
 Ye streams, beyond my hopes beheld again !
 To you once more your own Ulysses bows ;
 Attend his transports, and receive his vows ! 410
 If Jove prolong my days, and Pallas crown
 The growing virtues of my youthful son,

To you shall rites divine be ever paid,
And grateful offerings on your altars laid.

Then thus Minerva: From that anxious breast 415

Dismiss those cares, and leave to Heaven the rest.

Our task be now thy treasur'd stores to save,

Deep in the close recesses of the cave:

Then future means consult—the spoke, and trod

The shady grot that brighten'd with the God. 420

The closest caverns of the grot she sought;

The gold, the brais, the robes, Ulysses brought;

These in the secret gloom the chief dispos'd;

The entrance with a rock the Goddess clos'd.

Now, seated in the olive's sacred shade, 425

Confer the hero and the Martial Maid.

The Goddess of the azure eyes began:

Son of Laertes! much-experienc'd man!

The suitor-train thy earliest care demand,

Of that luxurious race to rid the land: 430

Three years thy house their lawless rule has seen;

And proud addresses to the matchless queen.

But she thy absence mourns from day to day,

And inly bleeds, and silent wails away;

Elusive of the bridal hour, she gives 435

Fond hopes to all, and all with hopes deceives.

To this Ulysses: O, celestial maid!

Prais'd be thy counsel, and thy timely aid:

Else had I seen my native walls in vain,

Like great Atreides just restor'd and slain. 440

Vouchsafe the means of vengeance to debate,

And plan with all thy arts the scene of fate.

Then, then be present, and my soul inspire,
 As when we wrap'd Troy's heaven-built walls in fire.
 Though leagu'd against me hundred heroes stand, 445
 Hundreds shall fall, if Pallas aid my hand.

She answer'd: In the dreadful day of fight
 Know, I am with thee, strong in all my might.
 If thou but equal to thyself be found,
 What gasping numbers then shall press the ground!
 What human victims stain the feastful floor!
 How wide the pavements float with guilty gore!
 It fits thee now to wear a dark disguise,
 And secret walk unknown to mortal eyes.
 For this, my hand shall wither every grace, 455
 And every elegance of form and face,
 O'er thy smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread,
 Turn hoar the auburn honours of thy head,
 Disfigure every limb with coarse attire,
 And in thy eyes extinguish all the fire; 460
 Add all the wants and the decays of life;
 Estrange thee from thy own; thy son, thy wife;
 From the loath'd object every sight shall turn,
 And the blind suitors their destruction scorn.

Go first the master of thy herds to find, 465
 True to his charge, a loyal swain and kind:
 For thee he sighs; and to the royal heir
 And chaste Penelope extends his care.
 At the Coracian rock he now resides,
 Where Arethusa's fable water glides; 470
 The fable water and the copious mast
 Swell the fat herd; luxuriant, large repast!

With

With him, rest peaceful in the rural cell,
And all you ask his faithful tongue shall tell.
Me into other realms my cares convey, 475
To Sparta, still with female beauty gay :
For know, to Sparta thy lov'd offspring came,
To learn thy fortunes from the voice of Fame.

At this the father, with a father's care,
Must he too suffer ? he, O Goddess ! bear
Of wanderings and of woes a wretched share ?
Through the wild ocean plough the dangerous way,
And leave his fortunes and his house a prey ?
Why would'st not thou, O all-enlighten'd Mind !
Inform him certain, and protect him, kind ? 485

To whom Minerva : Be thy soul at rest ;
And know, whatever Heaven ordains, is best.
To fame I sent him, to acquire renown :
To other regions is his virtue known :
Secure he sits, near great Atrides plac'd ! 490
With friendships strengthen'd, and with honours grac'd.
But, lo ! an ambush waits his passage o'er ;
Fierce foes insidious intercept the shore :
In vain ! far sooner all the murderous brood
This injur'd land shall fatten with their blood. 495

She spake, then touch'd him with her powerful wand :
The skin shrunk up, and wither'd at her hand :
A swift old age o'er all his members spread ;
A sudden frost was sprinkled on his head ;
Nor longer in the heavy eye-ball shin'd 500
The glance divine, forth-beaming from the mind.
His robe, which spots indelible besmear,
In rags dishonest flutters with the air :

A stag's torn hide is lapp'd around his reins;
 A rugged staff his trembling hand sustains; 505
 And at his side a wretched scrip was hung,
 Wide-patch'd, and knotted to a twisted thong.
 So look'd the chief, so mov'd, to mortal eyes
 Object uncouth! a man of miseries!
 While Pallas, cleaving the wide fields of air, 510
 To Sparta flies, Telemachus her care.

THE
FOURTEENTH BOOK

OF THE
ODYSSEY.



ARGUMENT.

THE CONVERSATION WITH EUMÆUS.

ULYSSES arrives in disguise at the house of Eumæus, where he is received, entertained, and lodged, with the utmost hospitality. The several discourses of that faithful old servant, with the feigned story told by Ulysses to conceal himself, and other conversations on various subjects, take up this entire Book.



[23]

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIV.

BUT he, deep-musing, o'er the mountains stray'd
Through mazy thickets of the woodland shade,
And cavern'd ways, the shaggy coast along,
With cliffs and nodding forests over-hung.
Eumæus at his sylvan lodge he sought,
A faithful servant, and without a fault.
Ulysses found him busied, as he sat
Before the threshold of his rustic gate;
Around the mansion in a circle shone
A rural portico of rugged stone
(In absence of his Lord, with honest toil
His own industrious hands had rais'd the pile).
The wall was stone from neighbouring quarries borne,
Encircled with a fence of native thorn,
And strong with pales, by many a weary stroke
Of stubborn labour hewn from heart of oak;
Frequent and thick. Within the space were rear'd
Twelve ample cells, the lodgement of his herd.
Full fifty pregnant females each contain'd;
The males without (a smaller race) remain;
Doom'd to supply the suitors' wasteful feast,
A stock by daily luxury decreas'd;

Now scarce four hundred left. These to defend,
 Four savage dogs, a watchful guard, attend;
 Here fate Eumæus, and his cares apply'd 25
 To form strong bulwarks of well-season'd hide.
 Of four assistants who his labour share,
 Three now were absent on the rural care;
 The fourth drove victims to the suiter train:
 But he, of antient faith, a simple swain, 30
 Sigh'd, while he furnish'd the luxurious board,
 And weary'd Heaven with wishes for his lord.

Soon as Ulysses near th' enclosure drew,
 With open mouths the furious mastives flew:
 Down fate the sage, and cautious to withstand, 35
 Let fall th' offensive truncheon from his hand.
 Sudden, the master runs; aloud he calls;
 And from his hasty hand the leather falls;
 With showers of stones he drives them far away;
 The scattering dogs around at distance bay. 40

Unhappy stranger! (thus the faithful swain)
 Began with accent gracious and humane)
 What sorrow had been mine, if at my gate
 Thy reverend age had met a shameful fate!
 Enough of woes already have I known; 45
 Enough my master's sorrows and my own.
 While here (ungrateful task!) his herds I feed,
 Ordain'd for lawless rioters to bleed;
 Perhaps, supported at another's board,
 Far from his country roams my hapless lord! 50
 Or sigh'd in exile for a his latest breath,
 Now cover'd with th' eternal shade of death!

But

But enter this my homely roof, and see
Our woods not void of hospitality,
Then tell me whence thou art? and what the share
Of woes and wanderings thou wert born to bear?

He said, and, seconding the kind request,
With friendly step precedes his unknown guest.
A shaggy goat's soft hide beneath him spread,
And with fresh rushes heap'd an ample bed:
Joy touch'd the hero's tender soul, to find
So just reception from a heart so kind:
And oh, ye Gods! with all your blessings grace
(He thus broke forth) this friend of human race!

The swain reply'd: It never was our guise
To slight the poor, or aught humane despise;
For Jove unfolds our hospitable door,
'Tis Jove that sends the stranger and the poor.
Little, alas! is all the good I can;
A man oppress'd, dependant, yet a man;
Accept such treatment as a swain affords,
Slave to the insolence of youthful lords!
Far hence is by unequal Gods remov'd
That man of bounties, loving and lov'd!
To whom whate'er his slave enjoys is ow'd,
And more, had Fate allow'd, had been bestow'd:
But Fate condemn'd him to a foreign shore;
Much have I sorrow'd, but my master more.
Now cold he lies, to death's embrace resign'd:
Ah, perish Helen! perish all her kind!
For whose curs'd cause, in Agamemnon's name,
He trod so fatally the paths of Fame.

His vest succinct then girding round his waist,
 Forth rush'd the swain with hospitable haste,
 Straight to the lodgements of his herd he run, 85
 Where the fat porkers slept beneath the sun;
 Of two, his cutlance lanch'd the spouting blood;
 These quarter'd, sing'd, and fix'd on forks of wood,
 All hasty on the hissing coals he threw;
 And smoking back the tasteful viands drew, 90
 Broachers and all; then on the board display'd
 The ready meal, before Ulysses laid
 With flour imbrown'd; next mingled wine yet new,
 And luscious as the bees nectareous dew:
 Then fate companion of the friendly feast, 95
 With open look; and thus bespoke his guest:

Take with free welcome what our hands prepare,
 Such food as falls to simple servants share;
 The best our Lords consume; those thoughtless peers,
 Rich without bounty, guilty without fears! 100
 Yet sure the Gods their impious acts detest,
 And honour justice and the righteous breast.
 Pirates and conquerors, of harden'd mind,
 The foes of peace, and scourges of mankind,
 To whom offending men are made a prey 105
 When Jove in vengeance gives a land away;
 Ev'n these, when of their ill-got spoils possess'd,
 Find sure tormentors in the guilty breast:
 Some voice of God close whispering from within,
 "Wretch! this is villainy, and this is sin." 110
 But these, no doubt, some oracle explore,
 That tells, the great Ulysses is no more.

Hence

Hence springs their confidence, and from our sighs
 Their rapine strengthens, and their riots rise:
 Constant as Jove the night and day bestows, 115
 Bleeds a whole hecatomb, a vintage flows.

None match'd this hero's wealth, of all who reign
 O'er the fair islands of the neighbouring main.
 Nor all the monarchs whose far-dreaded sway
 The wide-extended continents obey: 120

First, on the main land, of Ulysses' breed
 Twelve herds, twelve flocks, on ocean's margin feed;
 As many stalls for shaggy goats are rear'd;
 As many lodgements for the tusky herd;

Those foreign keepers guard: and here are seen 125
 Twelve herds of goats that graze our utmost green;
 To native pastors is their charge assign'd;
 And mine the care to feed the bristly kind:

Each day the fattest bleeds of either herd,
 All to the suitors wasteful board preferr'd. 130

Thus he, benevolent: his unknown guest
 With hunger keen devours the savoury feast;
 While schemes of vengeance ripen in his breast. }
 Silent and thoughtful while the board he ey'd,

Eumæus pours on high the purple tide; 135
 The king with smiling looks his joy express'd,
 And thus the kind inviting host address'd:

Say now, what man is he, the man deplor'd,
 So rich, so potent, whom you style your lord;
 Late with such affluence and possessions blest, 140
 And now in honour's glorious bedat rest?

Whoever was the warrior, he must be
 To Fame no stranger, nor perhaps to me;

Who

Who (so the Gods, and so the Fates ordain'd)
Have wander'd many a sea, and many a land. 145

Small is the faith, the prince and queen ascribe
(Reply'd Eumæus) to the wandering tribe,
For needy strangers still to flattery fly,
And want too oft' betrays the tongue to lye.
Each vagrant traveller that touches here, 150
Deludes with fallacies the royal ear,

To dear remembrance makes his image rise,
And calls the springing sorrows from her eyes.
Such thou may'st be, But he whose name you crave
Moulders in earth, or welters on the wave, 155

Or food for fish or dogs his reliques lie,
Or torn by birds are scatter'd through the sky.
So perish'd he: and left (for ever lost)
Much woe to all, but sure to me the most.

So mild a master never shall I find;
Less dear the parents whom I left behind,
Less soft my mother, less my father kind. }
Not with such transport would my eyes run o'er,
Again to hail them in their native shore;
As lov'd Ulysses once more to embrace, 165
Restor'd and breathing in his natal place.

That name for ever dread, yet ever dear,
Ev'n in his absence I pronounce with fear:
In my respect, he bears a prince's part;
But lives a very brother in my heart. 170

Thus spoke the faithful swain; and thus rejoin'd
The master of his grief, the man of patient mind:
Ulysses, friend! shall view his old abodes
(Distrustful as thou art); nor doubt the Gods.

Nor

Nor speak I rashly, but with faith averr'd, 175
And what I speak, attesting Heaven has heard,
If so, a cloke and vesture be my need,
Till his return, no title shall I plead,
Though certain be my news, and great my need,
Whom want itself can force untruths to tell, 180
My soul detests him as the gates of hell.

Thou first be witness, hospitable Jove!
And every God inspiring social love;
And witness every household power that waits
Guard of these fires, and angel of these gates! 185
Ere the next moon increase, or this decay,
His ancient realms Ulysses shall survey,
In blood and dust each proud oppressor mourn,
And the lost glories of his house return.

Nor shall that need be thine, nor ever more 190
Shall lov'd Ulysses hail this happy shore
(Replied Eumæus): to the present hour
Now turn thy thought, and joys within our power.

From sad reflection let my soul repose;
The name of him awakes a thousand woes. 195

But guard him, Gods! and to these arms restore!
Not his true consort can desire him more;

Not old Laertes, broken with despair;
Not young Telemachus, his blooming heir,

Alas, Telemachus! my sorrows flow 200
Afresh for thee, my second cause of woe!

Like some fair plant set by a heavenly hand,
He grew, he flourish'd, and he blest the land;

In all the youth his father's image shin'd,
Bright in his person, brighter in his mind. 205

What

What man, or God, deceiv'd his better sense,
 Far on the swelling seas to wander hence?
 To distant Pylos hapless is he gone,
 To seek his father's fate, and find his own!
 For traitors wait his way, with dire design
 To end at once the great Arcesian line.
 But let us leave him to their wills above;
 The fates of men are in the hand of Jove.
 And now, my venerable guest I declare
 Your name, your parents, and your native air.
 Sincere from whence begun your course relate,
 And to what ship I owe the friendly freight?

Thus he: and thus (with prompt invention bold)
 The cautious chief his ready story told:

On dark reserve what better can prevail,
 Or from the fluent tongue produce the tale,
 Than when two friends, alone, in peaceful place
 Confer, and wines and cates the table grace;
 But most, the kind inviter's chearful face?
 Thus might we sit, with social goblets crown'd,
 Till the whole circle of the year goes round;
 Not the whole circle of the year would close.
 My long narration of a life of woes.
 But such was Heaven's high will! Know then, I came
 From sacred Crete, and from a sire of fame:
 Castor Hylacides (that name he bore)
 Belov'd and honour'd in his native shore;
 Blest in his riches, in his children more.
 Sprung of a handmaid, from a bought embrace,
 I shar'd his kindness with his lawful race:

But

But when that fate, which all must undergo,
 From earth remov'd him to the shades below;
 The large domain his greedy sons divide,
 And each was portion'd as the lots decide.
 Little, alas! was left my wretched share, 245
 Except a house, a covert from the air:
 But what by niggard fortune was denied,
 A willing widow's copious wealth supplied.
 My valour was my plea, a gallant mind
 That, true to honour, never lagg'd behind }
 (The sex is ever to a soldier kind).
 Now wasting years my former strength confound,
 And added woes have bow'd me to the ground;
 Yet by the stubble you may guess the grain,
 And mark the ruins of no vulgar man. 250
 Me, Pallas gave to lead the martial storm,
 And the fair ranks of battle to deform:
 Me, Mars inspir'd to turn the foe to flight,
 And tempt the secret ambush of the night.
 Let ghastly death in all his forms appear, 255
 I saw him not, it was not mine to fear.
 Before the rest I rais'd my ready steel;
 The first I met, he yielded, or he fell.
 But works of peace my soul disdain'd to bear,
 The rural labour, or domestic care. 260
 To raise the mast, the missile dart to wing,
 And send swift arrows from the bounding string,
 Were arts the Gods made grateful to my mind;
 Those Gods, who turn (to various ends design'd)
 The various thoughts and talents of mankind. }

Before

Before the Grecians touch'd the Trojan plain;
 Nine times commander or by land or main,
 In foreign fields I spread my glory far,
 Great in the praise, rich in the spoils of war;
 Thence charg'd with riches, as increas'd in fame,
 To Crete return'd, an honourable name.
 But when great Jove that direful war decreed,
 Which rous'd all Greece, and made the mighty bleed;
 Our states myself and Idomen employ
 To lead their fleets, and carry death to Troy. 273
 Nine years we war'd; the tenth saw Ilion fall;
 Homeward we sail'd, but Heaven dispers'd us all.
 One only month my wife enjoy'd my stay;
 So will'd the God who gives and takes away.
 Nine ships I mann'd, equipp'd with ready stores, 280
 Intent to voyage to th' Egyptian shores;
 In feast and sacrifice my chosen train
 Six days consum'd; the seventh we plough'd the main.
 Crete's ample fields diminish to our eye;
 Before the Boreas blasts the vessels fly; 285
 Safe through the level seas we sweep our way;
 The steer-man governs, and the ships obey.
 The fifth fair morn we stem th' Egyptian tide;
 And tilting o'er the bay the vessels ride:
 To anchor there my fellows I command, 290
 And spies commission to explore the land.
 But, sway'd by lust of gain, and headlong will,
 The coasts they ravage, and the natives kill.
 The spreading clamour to their city flies,
 And horse and foot in mingled tumult rise. 295

The reddening dawn reveals the circling fields,
Horrid with bristly spears, and glancing shields.
Jove thunder'd on their side. Our guilty head
We turn'd to flight; the gathering vengeance spread
On all parts round, and heaps on heaps lie dead.

I then explor'd my thought, what course to prove;
(And sure the thought was dictated by Jove,
Oh! had he left me to that happier doom,
And sav'd a life of miseries to come!)

The radiant helmet from my brows unlac'd,
And low on earth my shield and javelin cast,
I meet the monarch with a suppliant's face,
Approach his chariot, and his knees embrace.
He heard, he sav'd, he plac'd me at his side;
My state he pity'd, and my tears he dried,
Restrain'd the rage the vengeful foe express'd,
And turn'd the deadly weapons from my breast.
Pious! to guard the hospitable rite,
And fearing Jove, whom mercy's works delight.

In Ægypt thus with peace and plenty blest,
I liv'd (and happy still had liv'd) a guest,
On seven bright years successive blessings wait;
The next chang'd all the colour of my fate.
A false Phœnician, of insidious mind,
Vers'd in vile arts, and foe to humankind,
With semblance fair invites me to his home;
I seiz'd the proffer (ever fond to roam)
Domestic in his faithless roof I stay'd,
Till the swift sun his annual circle made.

To Libya then he meditates the way;
 With guileful art a stranger to betray,
 And sell to bondage in a foreign land:
 Much doubting, yet compell'd, I quit the strand.
 Through the mid seas the nimble pinnace sails,
 Aloof from Crete, before the northern gales:
 But when remote her chalky cliffs we lost,
 And far from ken of any other coast,
 When all was wild expanse of sea and air;
 Then doom'd high Jove due vengeance to prepare.
 He hung a night of horrors o'er their head
 (The shaded ocean blacken'd as it spread);
 He launch'd the fiery bolt; from pole to pole
 Broad burst the lightnings, deep the thunders roll;
 In giddy rounds the whirling ship is tost,
 And all in clouds of smothering sulphur lost.
 As from a hanging rock's tremendous height,
 The fable crows with intercepted flight
 Drop headlong: scarr'd and black with sulphurous hue,
 So from the deck are hurl'd the ghastly crew.
 Such end the wicked found! but Jove's intent
 Was yet to save th' oppress'd and innocent.
 Plac'd on the mast (the last recourse of life)
 With winds and waves I held unequal strife;
 For nine long days the billows tilting o'er,
 The tenth soft wafts me to Thesprotia's shore.
 The monarch's son a shipwreck'd wretch reliev'd,
 The fire with hospitable rites receiv'd,
 And in his palace like a brother plac'd,
 With gifts of price and gorgeous garments grac'd.

While

While here I sojourn'd, oft I heard the fame 355
 How late Ulysses to the country came,
 How lov'd, how honour'd, in this court he stay'd,
 And here his whole collected treasure lay'd;
 I saw myself the vast unnumber'd store
 Of steel elaborate, and refulgent ore, 360
 And brass high heap'd amidst the regal dome;
 Immense supplies for ages yet to come!
 Meantime he voyag'd to explore the will
 Of Jove, on high Dodona's holy hill,
 What means might best his safe return avail, 365
 To come in pomp, or bear a secret sail?
 Full oft has Phidon, whilst he pour'd the wine,
 Attesting solemn all the Powers divine,
 That soon Ulysses would return, declar'd,
 The sailors waiting, and the ships prepar'd. 370
 But first the king dismiss'd me from his shores,
 For fair Dulichium crown'd with fruitful stores;
 To good Acastus' friendly care consign'd:
 But other counsels pleas'd the sailors mind:
 New frauds were plotted by the faithless train, 375
 And misery demands me once again.
 Soon as remote from shore they plough the wave,
 With ready hands they rush to seize their slave;
 Then with these tatter'd rags thy wrap'd me round,
 (Strip'd of my own) and to the vessel bound. 380
 At eve, at Ithaca's delightful land
 The ship arriv'd: forth-issuing on the sand
 They sought repast; while to th' unhappy kind,
 The pitying Gods themselves my chains unbind.

Soft I descended, to the sea applied
 My naked breast, and float along the tide.
 Soon past beyond their sight, I left the flood,
 And took the spreading shelter of the wood.
 Their prize escap'd the faithless pirates mourn'd;
 But deem'd enquiry vain, and to their ship return'd.
 Screen'd by protecting Gods from hostile eyes,
 They led me to a good man and a wife,
 To leave beneath thy hospitable care,
 And wait the woes Heaven dooms me yet to bear.

Unhappy guest! whose sorrows touch my mind! 395
 (Thus good Eumæus with a sigh rejoin'd)
 For real sufferings since I grieve sincere,
 Check not with fallacies the springing tear;
 Nor turn the passion into groundless joy
 For him, whom Heaven has destin'd to destroy. 400
 Oh! had he perish'd on some well-fought day,
 Or in his friend's embraces died away!
 That grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise
 Historic marbles, to record his praise:
 His praise, eternal on the faithful stone, 405
 Had with transmissive honours grac'd his son.
 Now snatch'd by harpies to the dreary coast,
 Sunk is the hero, and his glory lost!
 While pensive in this solitary den,
 Far from gay cities and the ways of men, 410
 I linger life; nor to the court repair,
 But when the constant queen commands my care;
 Or when, to taste her hospitable board,
 Some guest arrives, with rumours of her lord;

And

And these indulge their want, and those their woe,
 And here the tears, and there the goblets flow.
 By many such I have been warn'd; but chief
 By one Ætolian robb'd of all belief,
 Whose hap it was to this our roof to roam,
 For murder banish'd from his native home. 429
 He swore, Ulysses on the coast of Crete
 Staid but a season to refit his fleet;
 A few revolving months should waft him o'er,
 Fraught with bold warriors, and a boundless store.
 O thou! whom age has taught to understand, 425
 And Heaven has guided with a favouring hand!
 On God or mortal to obtrude a lie
 Forbear, and dread to flatter as to die.
 Not for such ends my house and heart are free,
 But dear respect to Jove, and charity. 430

And why, O swain of unbelieving mind!
 (Thus quick reply'd the wisest of mankind)
 Doubt you my oath? yet more my faith to try,
 A solemn compact let us ratify,
 And witness every Power that rules the sky }
 If here Ulysses from his labours rest,
 Be then my prize a tunic and a vest;
 And, where my hopes invite me, straight transport
 In safety to Dulichium's friendly court.
 But, if he greets not thy desiring eye, }
 Hurl me from yon' dread precipice on high;
 The due reward of fraud and perjury. }

Doubtless, O guest! great laud and praise were mine
 (Reply'd the swain for spotless faith divine)

If, after social rites and gifts bestow'd, 445
 I stain'd my hospitable hearth with blood,
 How would the Gods my righteous toils succeed,
 And bless the hand that made a stranger bleed?
 No more—th' approaching hours of silent night
 First claim refection, then to rest invite; 450
 Beneath our humble cottage let us haste,
 And here, unenvy'd, rural dainties taste.

Thus commun'd these, while to their lowly dome
 The full-fed swine return'd with evening home;
 Compell'd, reluctant, to the several sties, 455
 With din obstreperous, and ungrateful cries,
 Then to the slaves—Now from the herd the best
 Select, in honour of our foreign guest:
 With him let us the genial banquet share,
 For great and many are the griefs we bear; 460
 While those who from our labours heap their board,
 Blaspheme their feeder, and forget their lord.

Thus speaking, with dispatchful hand he took
 A weighty ax, and cleft the solid oak;
 This on the earth he pil'd; a boar full fed, 465
 Of five years age, before the pile was led:
 The swain, whom acts of piety delight,
 Observant of the Gods, begins the rite;
 First shears the forehead of the bristly boar,
 And suppliant stands, invoking every Power }
 To speed Ulysses to his native shore.
 A knotty stake then aiming at his head,
 Down dropp'd he groaning, and the spirit fled.
 The scorching flames climb round on every side;
 Then the sing'd members they with skill divide;

On these, in rolls of fat involv'd with art,
The choicest morsels lay from every part.
Some in the flames, bestrow'd with flour, they threw:
Some cut in fragments, from the forks they drew;
These while on several tables they dispose, 480
As priest himself the blameless rustick rose;
Expert the destin'd victim to dis-part
In seven just portions, pure of hand and heart.
One sacred to the Nymphs apart they lay;
Another to the winged son of May: 485
The rural tribe in common share the rest,
The king the chine, the honour of the feast,
Who sate delighted at his servant's board;
The faithful servant joy'd his unknown lord.
Oh! be thou dear (Ulysses cry'd) to Jove, 490
As well thou claim'st a grateful stranger's love!

Be then thy thanks (the bounteous swain reply'd)
Enjoyment of the good the Gods provide.
From God's own hand descend our joys and woes;
These he decrees, and he but suffers those: 495
All power is his, and whatso'er he wills,
The will itself, omnipotent, fulfills.
This said, the first-fruits to the Gods he gave;
Then pour'd of offer'd wine the sable wave:
In great Ulysses' hand he plac'd the bowl, 500
He sate, and sweet refection chear'd his soul.
The bread from cannisters Mesaulius gave,
(Eumæus' proper treasure bought this slave,
And led from Taphos, to attend his board,
A servant added to his absent lord) 505

His

His task it was the wheaten loaves to lay,
 And from the banquet take the bowls away,
 And now the rage of hunger was repress'd,
 And each betakes him to his couch to rest.

Now came the night, and darkness cover'd o'er
 The face of things; the winds began to roar;
 The driving storm the watery west-wind pours;
 And Jove descends in deluges of showers,
 Studious of rest and warmth, Ulysses lies,
 Foreseeing from the first the storm would rise;
 In mere necessity of coat and cloak,
 With artful preface to his host he spoke:

Hear me, my friends! who this good banquet grace;
 'Tis sweet to play the fool in time and place,
 And wine can of their wits the wise beguile,
 Make the sage frolic, and the serious smile,
 The grave in merry measures frisk about,
 And many a long-repent'd word bring out.
 Since to be talkative I now commence,
 Let wit cast off the sullen yoke of sense.
 Once I was strong (would Heaven restore those days!)
 And with my betters claim'd a share of praise,
 Ulysses, Menelaus, led forth a band,
 And join'd me with them ('twas their own command);
 A deathful ambush for the foe to lay,
 Beneath Troy's walls by night we took our way:
 There, clad in arms, along the marshes spread,
 We made the oser-fringed bank our bed.
 Full soon th' inclemency of Heaven I feel,
 Nor had these shoulders covering but of steel.

Sharp

Sharp blew the north; snow whitening all the fields;
Froze with the blast, and gathering glaz'd our shields.
There all but I, well fenc'd with cloak and vest,
Lay cover'd by their ample shields at rest.
Fool that I was! I left behind my own;
The skill of weather and of winds unknown,
And trusted to my coat and shield alone!
When now was wasted more than half the night,
And the stars faded at approaching light;
Sudden I jogg'd Ulysses, who was laid
Fast by my side, and shivering thus I said:

Here longer in this field I cannot lie;
The winter pinches, and with cold I die,
And die aham'd (O wisest of mankind)
The only fool who left his cloak behind.

He thought, and answer'd: hardly waking yet,
Sprung in his mind the momentary wit
(That wit, which or in council, or in fight,
Still met th' emergence, and determin'd right).
Hush thee, he cry'd, (soft whispering in my ear)
Speak not a word, lest any Greek may hear—

And then (supporting on his arm his head)
Hear me, companions! (thus aloud he said)
Methinks too distant from the fleet we lie;
Ev'n now a vision stood before my eye,
And sure the warning vision was from high:
Let from among us some swift courier rise,
Haste to the general, and demand supplies.

Upstart'd Thoas straight, Andraemon's son,
Nimble he rose, and cast his garment down;

Instant,

Instant, the racer vanish'd off the ground;
 That instant, in his cloak I wrap'd me round:
 And safe I slept, till brightly dawning shone
 The morn conspicuous on her golden throne. 570

Oh, were my strength as then, as then my age!
 Some friend would fence me from the winter's rage.
 Yet, tatter'd as I look, I challeng'd then
 The honours and the offices of men:
 Some master, or some servant, would allow
 A cloak and vest—but I am nothing now! 575

Well hast thou spoke (rejoin'd th'attentive swain)
 Thy lips let fall no idle word or vain!
 Nor garment shalt thou want, nor aught beside,
 Meet for the wandering suppliant to provide. 580
 But in the morning take thy cloaths again,
 For here one vest suffices every swain;
 No change of garments to our hands is known:
 But, when return'd, the good Ulysses' son
 With better hand shall grace with fit attire
 His guest, and send thee where thy soul desires. 585

The honest herdsman rose, as this he said,
 And drew before the hearth the stranger's bed:
 The fleecy spoils of sheep, a goat's rough hide
 He spreads; and adds a mantle thick and wide; 590
 With store to heap above him, and below,
 And guard each quarter as the tempests blow.
 There lay the king and all the rest supine;
 All, but the careful master of the swine;
 Forth hasted he to tend his bristly care: 595
 Well arm'd, and fenc'd against nocturnal air;

His

His weighty faulchion o'er his shoulder tied :
His shaggy cloak a mountain goat supplied :
With his broad spear, the dread of dogs and men,
He seeks his lodging in the rocky den. 600
There to the tusky herd he bends his way,
Where, screen'd from Boreas, high o'er-arch'd they lay.

His weighty sanction o'er his shoulder laid;
 His shaggy cloak a mountain goat supplied;
 With his broad breast, the head of dogs and men;
 He seeks his lodging in the rocky den.
 There to the lucky herd he bends his way,
 Where, leaven'd from Boeotia, high o'er-arch'd they lay.

THE ODYSSEY

BOOK XV
A R G U M E N T

THE RETURN OF ULYSSES
THE GODS MINDS TELEPHUS IN A
VISION TO ULYSSES. ULYSSES AND
FIFTEENTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.



A R G U M E N T.

THE RETURN OF TELEMACHUS.

THE Goddess Minerva commands Telemachus in a vision to return to Ithaca. Pisistratus and he take leave of Menelaüs, and arrive at Pylos, where they part; and Telemachus sets sail, after having received on board Theoclymenus the soothsayer. The scene then changes to the cottage of Eumæus, who entertains Ulysses with a recital of his adventures. In the mean time Telemachus arrives on the coast, and, sending the vessel to the town, proceeds by himself to the lodge of Eumæus.



THE

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XV.

NOW had Minerva reach'd those ample plains,
 Fam'd for the dance, where Menelaüs reigns;
 Anxious she flies to great Ulysses' heir,
 His instant voyage challeng'd all her care.
 Beneath the royal portico display'd, 5
 With Nestor's son, Telemachus was lay'd;
 In sleep profound the son of Nestor lies;
 Not thine, Ulysses! Care unseal'd his eyes:
 Restless he griev'd, with various fears oppress'd,
 And all thy fortunes roll'd within his breast. 10
 When, O Telemachus! (the Goddess said)
 Too long in vain, too widely hast thou stray'd.
 Thus leaving careless thy paternal right
 The robbers' prize, the prey to lawless might.
 On fond pursuits neglectful while you roam, 15
 Ev'n now the hand of rapine sacks the dome.
 Hence to Atrides; and his leave implore
 To launch thy vessel for thy natal shore;
 Fly, whilst thy mother virtuous yet withstands
 Her kindred's wishes, and her sire's commands; 20
 Through both Eurymachus pursues the dame,
 And with the noblest gifts asserts his claim.

Hence

Hence therefore, while thy stores thy own remain;
 Thou know'st the practice of the female train :
 Lost in the children of the present spouse 25
 They slight the pledges of their former vows ;
 Their love is always with the lover past ;
 Still the succeeding flame expels the last.
 Let o'er thy house some chosen maid preside,
 Till Heaven decrees to bless thee in a bride. 30
 But now thy more attentive ears incline,
 Observe the warnings of a Power divine :
 For thee their shares the suitor lords shall lay
 In Samos' sands, or straits of Ithaca ;
 To seize thy life shall lurk the murderous band, 35
 Ere yet thy footsteps press thy native land.
 No—sooner far their riot and their lust
 All-covering earth shall bury deep in dust !
 Then distant from the scatter'd islands steer,
 Nor let the night retard thy full career ; 40
 Thy heavenly guardian shall instruct the gales,
 To smoothe thy passage, and supply thy sails :
 And when at Ithaca thy labour ends,
 Send to the town thy vessel with thy friends ;
 But seek thou first the master of thy swine 45
 (For still to thee his loyal thoughts incline) ;
 There pass the night : while he his course pursues
 To bring Penelope the wish'd-for news,
 That thou, safe sailing from the Pylian strand,
 Art come to bless her in thy native land. 50
 Thus spoke the Goddess, and resum'd her flight,
 To the pure regions of eternal light.

Meanwhile Pisistratus he gently shakes,
And with these words the slumbering youth awakes:

Rise, son of Nestor! for the road prepare, 55
And join the harness'd coursers to the car.

What cause, he cried, can justify our flight,
To tempt the dangers of forbidden night?
Here wait we rather, till approaching day
Shall prompt our speed, and point the ready way. 60
Nor think of flight, before the Spartan king
Shall bid-farewell, and bounteous presents bring;
Gifts, which, to distant ages safely stor'd,
The sacred act of friendship shall record.

Thus he. But when the dawn bestreak'd the east,
The king from Helen rose, and sought his guest.
As soon as his approach the hero knew,
The splendid mantle round him first he threw,
Then o'er his ample shoulders whirl'd the cloak,
Respectful met the monarch, and bespoke: 70

Hail great Atrides, favour'd of high Jove!
Let not thy friends in vain for licence move.
Swift let us measure back the watery way,
Nor check our speed, impatient of delay.

If with desire so strong thy bosom glows, 75
Ill, said the king, should I thy wish oppose;
For oft in others freely I reprove
The ill-tim'd efforts of officious love;
Who love too much, hate in the like extreme,
And both the golden mean alike condemn. 80
Alike he thwarts the hospitable end,
Who drives the free, or stays the hasty friend;

True friendship's laws are by this rule express'd,
 Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.
 Yet stay, my friends, and in your chariot take 85
 The noblest presents that our love can make :
 Meantime commit we to our women's care,
 Some choice domestic viands to prepare ;
 The traveller, rising from the banquet gay,
 Eludes the labours of the tedious way. 90
 Then if a wider course shall rather please
 Through spacious Argos, and the realms of Greece,
 Atrides in his chariot shall attend ;
 Himself thy convoy to each royal friend.
 No prince will let Ulysses' heir remove 95
 Without some pledge, some monument of love ;
 These will the caldron, these the tripod give,
 From those the well-pair'd mules we shall receive, }
 Or bowl emboss'd whose golden figures live.
 To whom the youth, for prudence fam'd, replied :
 O monarch, care of Heaven ! thy people's pride !
 No friend in Ithaca my place supplies,
 No powerful hands are there, no watchful eyes :
 My stores expos'd and fenceless house demand
 The speediest succour from my guardian hand ; 105
 Left, in a search too anxious and too vain
 Of one lost joy, I lose what yet remain.
 His purpose when the generous warrior heard,
 He charg'd the household cates to be prepar'd.
 Now with the dawn, from his adjoining home, 110
 Was Boethœdes Eteonus come ;
 Swift as the word he forms the rising blaze,
 And o'er the coals the smoking fragments lays.

Mean-

Meantime the king, his son, and Helen, went
 Where the rich wardrobe breath'd a costly scent. 115
 The king selected from the glittering rows
 A bowl; the prince a silver beaker chose.
 The beauteous queen revolv'd with careful eyes
 Her various textures of unnumber'd dyes,
 And chose the largest; with no vulgar art 120
 Her own fair hands embroider'd every part:
 Beneath the rest it lay divinely bright,
 Like radiant Hesper o'er the gems of night.
 Then with each gift they hasten'd to their guest,
 And thus the king Ulysses' heir address'd: 125

Since fix'd are thy resolves, may thundering Jove
 With happiest omens thy desires approve!
 This silver bowl, whose costly margins shine
 Enchas'd with gold, this valued gift be thine;
 To me this present, of Vulcanian frame, 130
 From Sidon's hospitable monarch came;
 To thee we now consign the precious load,
 The pride of kings and labour of a God.

Then gave the cup; while Megapenthe brought
 The silver vase with living sculpture wrought. 135
 The beauteous queen, advancing next, display'd
 The shining veil, and thus endearing said:

Accept, dear youth, this monument of love,
 Long since, in better days, by Helen wove:
 Safe in thy mother's care the vesture lay, 140
 To deck thy bride, and grace thy nuptial day.
 Meantime may'st thou with happiest speed regain
 Thy stately palace, and thy wide domain.

She said, and gave the veil; with grateful look
 The prince the variegated present took. 145
 And now, when through the royal dome they pass'd,
 High on a throne the king each stranger plac'd.
 A golden ewer th' attendant damsel brings,
 Replete with water from the crystal springs;
 With copious streams the shining vase supplies 150
 A silver laver of capacious size.
 They wash. The tables in fair order spread,
 The glittering canisters are crown'd with bread;
 Viands of various kinds allure the taste,
 Of choicest sort and savour; rich repast! 155
 Whilst Eteonus portions out the shares,
 Atrides' son the purple draught prepares.
 And now (each sated with the genial feast,
 And the short rage of thirst and hunger ceas'd)
 Ulysses' son, with his illustrious friend, 160
 The horses join, the polish'd car ascend.
 Along the court the fiery steeds rebound,
 And the wide portal echoes to the sound.
 The king precedes; a bowl with fragrant wine
 (Libation destin'd to the powers divine) 165
 His right-hand held: before the steeds he stands,
 Then, mix'd with prayers, he utters these commands:
 Farewell, and prosper, youths! let Nestor know
 What grateful thoughts still in this bosom glow,
 For all the proofs of his paternal care, 170
 Trough the long dangers of the ten years war.
 Ah! doubt not our report (the prince rejoin'd)
 Of all the virtues of thy generous mind.

And oh ! return'd might we Ulysses meet !
To him thy presents show, thy words repeat : 175
How will each speech his grateful wonder raise !
How will each gift indulge us in thy praise !

Scarce ended thus the prince, when on the right
Advanc'd the bird of Jove : auspicious sight !
A milk-white fowl his clinching talons bore, 180
With care domestic pamper'd at the floor.
Peasants in vain with threatening cries pursue,
In solemn speed the bird majestic flew
Full dexter to the car : the prosperous sight
Fill'd every breast with wonder and delight. 185

But Nestor's son the chearful silence broke,
And in these words the Spartan chief bespoke.
Say, if to us the Gods these omens send,
Or fates peculiar to thyself portend ?

Whilst yet the monarch paus'd with doubts oppress'd,
The beauteous queen reliev'd his labouring breast.

Hear me, she cried, to whom the Gods have given
To read this sign, and mystic sense of Heaven.
As thus the plummy sovereign of the air
Left on the mountain's brow his callow care, 195
And wander'd through the wide æthereal way
To pour his wrath on yon luxurious prey ;
So shall thy god-like father, toss'd in vain
Through all the dangers of the boundless main,
Arrive (or is perchance already come) 200
From slaughter'd gluttons to release the dome.

Oh ! if this promis'd bliss by thundering Jove
(The prince replied) stand fix'd in fate above ;

To thee, as to some God, I'll temples raise,
And crown thy altars with the costly blaze. 205

He said; and, bending o'er his chariot, flung
Athwart the fiery steeds the smarting thong;
The bounding shafts upon the harness play,
Till night descending intercepts the way.
To Diocles, at Pheræ, they repair, 210
Whose boasted fire was sacred Alpheus' heir;
With him all night the youthful strangers stay'd,
Nor found the hospitable rites unpay'd.
But soon as morning from her orient bed
Had ting'd the mountains with her earliest red, 215
They join'd the steeds, and on the chariot sprung;
The brazen portals in their passage rung.

To Pylos soon they came; when thus begun
To Nestor's heir Ulysses' god-like son:
Let not Pisistratus in vain be prest, 220
Nor unconsenting hear his friend's request;
His friend by long hereditary claim,
In toils his equal, and in years the same.
No farther from our vessel, I implore,
The coursers drive; but lash them to the shore. 225
Too long thy father would his friend detain;
I dread his proffer'd kindness urg'd in vain.

The hero paus'd, and ponder'd this request,
While love and duty warr'd within his breast.
At length resolv'd, he turn'd his ready hand, 230
And lash'd his panting coursers to the strand.
There, while within the poop with care he stor'd
The regal presents of the Spartan lord;

With

With speed be gone (said he); call every mate,
Ere yet to Nestor I the tale relate: 235

'Tis true, the fervour of his generous heart
Brooks no repulse, nor could'st thou soon depart;
Himself will seek thee here, nor wilt thou find,
In words alone, the Pylian monarch kind.
But when, arriv'd, he thy return shall know, 240
How will his breast with honest fury glow!
This said, the sounding strokes his horses fire,
And soon he reach'd the palace of his fire.

Now (cried Telemachus) with speedy care
Hoist every sail, and every oar prepare. 245
Swift as the word his willing mates obey,
And seize their seats, impatient for the sea.

Meantime the prince with sacrifice adores
Minerva, and her guardian aid implores;
When, lo! a wretch ran breathless to the shore, 250
New from his crime, and reeking yet with gore.
A seer he was, from great Melampus sprung,
Melampus, who in Pylos flourish'd long,
Till, urg'd by wrongs, a foreign realm he chose,
Far from the hateful cause of all his woes. 255
Neleus his treasures one long year detains;
As long, he groan'd in Philacus's chains:
Meantime, what anguish, and what rage, combin'd,
For lovely Pero rack'd his labouring mind!
Yet 'scap'd he death; and vengeful of his wrong 260
To Pylos drove the lowing herds along:
Then (Neleus vanquish'd, and consign'd the Fair
To Bias' arms) he sought a foreign air;

Argos the rich for his retreat he chose,
 There form'd his empire ; there his palace rose. 265
 From him Antiphates and Mantius came :
 The first begot Oïclus great in fame,
 And he Amphiarus, immortal name !
 The people's saviour, and divinely wise,
 Belov'd by Jove, and him who gilds the skies,
 Yet short his date of life ! by female pride he dies.
 From Mantius Clitus, whom Aurora's love
 Snatch'd for his beauty to the thrones above :
 And Polyphides on whom Phœbus shone
 With fullest rays, Amphiarus now gone ; 275
 In Hypereſia's groves he made abode,
 And taught mankind the counſels of the God.
 From him ſprung Theoclymenus, who found
 (The ſacred wine yet foaming on the ground)
 Telemachus : whom, as to Heaven he preſs'd 280
 His ardent vows, the ſtranger thus addreſs'd :
 O thou ! that doſt thy happy courſe prepare
 With pure libations, and with ſolemn prayer ;
 By that dread Power to whom thy vows are paid ;
 By all the lives of theſe ; thy own dear head, 285
 Declare ſincerely to no foe's demand
 Thy name, thy lineage, and paternal land.
 Prepare then, ſaid Telemachus, to know
 A tale from falſehood free, not free from woe,
 From Ithaca, of royal birth, I came, 290
 And great Ulyſſes (ever honour'd name !)
 Was once my ſire : though now for ever loſt
 In Stygian gloom he glides a penſive ghoul !

Whoſe

Whose fate enquiring through the world we rove ;
The last, the wretched, proof of filial love. 295

The stranger then : Nor shall I aught conceal,
But the dire secret of my fate reveal.

Of my own tribe an Argive wretch I slew ;
Whose powerful friends the luckless deed pursue
With unrelenting rage, and force from home 300
The blood-stain'd exile, ever doom'd to roam.
But bear, O bear me o'er yon azure flood ;
Receive the suppliant ! spare my destin'd blood !

Stranger (replied the prince) securely rest
Affianc'd in our faith ; henceforth our guest. 305

Thus affable, Ulysses' god-like heir
Takes from the stranger's hand the glittering spear :
He climbs the ship, ascends the stern with haste,
And by his side the guest accepted plac'd.

The chief his orders gives : th' obedient band 310
With due observance wait the chief's command ;
With speed the mast they rear, with speed unbind
The spacious sheet, and stretch it to the wind.

Minerva calls ; the ready gales obey
With rapid speed to whirl them o'er the sea. 315

Crunus they pass'd, next Chalchis roll'd away,
When thickening darkness clos'd the doubtful day ;
The silver Phæa's glittering rills they lost,
And skimm'd along by Elis' sacred coast.

Then cautious through the rocky reaches wind, 320
And, turning sudden, shun the death design'd.

Meantime the king, Eumæus, and the rest,
Sate in the cottage, at their rural feast :

The

The banquet past, and satiate every man,
To try his host, Ulysses thus began : 325

Yet one night more, my friends, indulge your guest ;
The last I purpose in your walls to rest :
To-morrow for myself I must provide,
And only ask your counsel, and a guide :
Patient to roam the street, by hunger led, 330
And bless the friendly hand that gives me bread.

There in Ulysses' roof I may relate
Ulysses' wanderings to his royal mate ;
Or, mingling with the suitors' haughty train,
Not undeserving some support obtain, 335
Hermes to me his various gifts imparts,
Patron of industry and manual arts :

Few can with me in dextrous works contend,
The pyre to build, the stubborn oak to rend ;
To turn the tasteful viand o'er the flame ; 340
Or foam the goblet with a purple stream.
Such are the tasks of men of mean estate,
Whom fortune dooms to serve the rich and great.

Alas ! (Eumæus with a sigh rejoin'd)
How sprung a thought so monstrous in thy mind ! 345
If on that god-less race thou would'st attend,
Fate owes thee sure a miserable end !

Their wrongs and blasphemies ascend the sky,
And pull descending vengeance from on high.
Not such, my friend, the servants of their feast ; 350
A blooming train in rich embroidery drest,
With earth's whole tribute the bright table bends,
And smiling round celestial youth attends.

Stay then : no eye askance beholds thee here :
 Sweet is thy converse to each social ear ; 355
 Well pleas'd, and pleasing, in our cottage rest,
 Till good Telemachus accepts his guest
 With genial gifts, and change of fair attires,
 And safe conveys thee where thy soul desires.
 To him the man of woes : O gracious Jove ! 360
 Reward this stranger's hospitable love !
 Who knows the son of sorrow to relieve,
 Cheers the sad heart, nor lets affliction grieve.
 Of all the ills unhappy mortals know,
 A life of wanderings is the greatest woe : 365
 On all their weary ways wait care and pain,
 And pine and penury, a meagre train.
 To such a man since harbour you afford,
 Relate the farther fortunes of your lord ;
 What cares his mother's tender breast engage, 370
 And fire forsaken on the verge of age ;
 Beneath the sun prolong they yet their breath,
 Or range the house of darkness and of death ?
 To whom the swain : Attend what you enquire ;
 Laertes lives, the miserable sire 375
 Lives, but implores of every Power to lay
 The burden down, and wishes for the day.
 Torn from his offspring in the eve of life,
 Torn from th' embraces of his tender wife,
 Sole, and all comfortless, he wastes away 380
 Old age, untimely posting ere his day.
 She too, sad mother ! for Ulysses lost
 Pin'd out her bloom, and vanish'd to a ghost.

(So dire a fate, ye righteous Gods! avert,
 From every friendly, every feeling heart!) 383
 While yet she was, though clouded o'er with grief,
 Her pleasing converse minister'd relief:
 With Ctimene, her youngest daughter, bred,
 One roof contain'd us, and one table fed.
 But when the softly-stealing pæc of time 390
 Crept on from childhood into youthful prime,
 To Samos' isle she sent the wedded fair;
 Me to the fields, to tend the rural care;
 Array'd in garments her own hands had wove,
 Nor less the darling object of her love. 395
 Her hapless death my brighter days o'ercaſt,
 Yet Providence deserts me not at laſt;
 My preſent labours food and drink procure,
 And more, the pleaſure to relieve the poor.
 Small is the comfort from the queen to hear 400
 Unwelcome news, or vex the royal ear;
 Blank and diſcountenanc'd the ſervants ſtand,
 Nor dare to queſtion where the proud command:
 No profit ſprings beneath uſurping powers;
 Want feeds not there, where luxury devours, 405
 Nor harbours charity where riot reigns:
 Proud are the lords, and wretched are the ſwains.
 The ſuffering chief at this began to melt;
 And, O Eumæus! thou (he cries) haſt felt
 The ſpite of fortune too! her cruel hand 410
 Snatch'd thee an infant from thy native land!
 Snatch'd from thy parents' arms, thy parents' eyes,
 To early wants! a man of miſeries!

Thy-

Thy whole sad story, from its first, declare :
 Sunk the fair city by the rage of war, 415
 Where once thy parents dwelt ? or did they keep,
 In humbler life, the lowing herds and sheep ?
 So left perhaps to tend the fleecy train,
 Rude pirates seiz'd, and shipp'd thee o'er the main ?
 Doom'd a fair prize to grace some prince's board, 420
 The worthy purchase of a foreign lord.

If then my fortunes can delight my friend,
 A story fruitful of events attend :
 Another's sorrow may thy ear enjoy,
 And wine the lengthen'd intervals employ. 425
 Long nights the now declining year bestows ;
 A part we consecrate to soft repose,
 A part in pleasing talk we entertain ;
 For too much rest itself becomes a pain.
 Let those, whom sleep invites, the call obey, 430
 Their cares resuming with the dawning day :
 Here let us feast, and to the feast be join'd
 Discourse, the sweeter banquet of the mind ;
 Review the series of our lives, and taste
 The melancholy joy of evils past : 435
 For he who much has suffer'd, much will know ;
 And pleas'd remembrance builds delight on woe.

Above Ortygia lies an isle of fame,
 Far hence remote, and Syria is the name
 (There curious eyes inscrib'd with wonder trace 440
 The sun's diurnal, and his annual race) ;
 Not large, but fruitful ; stor'd with grafs, to keep
 The bellowing oxen, and the bleating sheep ;

Her

Her sloping hills the mantling vines adorn,
 And her rich valleys wave with golden corn. 445
 No want, no famine, the glad natives know,
 Nor sink by sickness to the shades below;
 But when a length of years unnerves the strong,
 Apollo comes, and Cynthia comes along.
 They bend the silver bow with tender skill, 450
 And, void of pain, the silent arrows kill.
 Two equal tribes this fertile land divide,
 Where two fair cities rise with equal pride.
 But both in constant peace one prince obey,
 And Ctesius there, my father, holds the sway. 455
 Freight'd, it seems, with toys of every sort
 A ship of Sidon anchor'd in our port;
 What-time it chanc'd the palace entertain'd,
 Skill'd in rich works, a woman of their land:
 This nymph, where anchor'd the Phœnician train 460
 To wash her robes descending to the main,
 A smooth-tongued sailor won her to his mind
 (For love deceives the best of woman-kind.)
 A sudden trust from sudden liking grew;
 She told her name, her race, and all she knew. 465
 I too (she cry'd) from glorious Sidon came,
 My father Arybas, of wealthy fame;
 But, snatch'd by pirates from my native place,
 The Taphians fold me to this man's embrace.
 Hasten then (the false designing youth reply'd) 470
 Hasten to thy country; love shall be thy guide;
 Hasten to thy father's house, thy father's breast,
 For still he lives, and lives with riches blest.

“ Swear

" Swear first (she cry'd) ye sailors ! to restore
 " A wretch in safety to her native shore."
 Swift as she ask'd, the ready sailors swore.
 She then proceeds : Now let our compact made
 Be nor by signal nor by word betray'd,
 Nor near me any of your crew descried
 By road frequented, or by fountain side. 480
 Be silence still our guard. The monarch's spies
 (For watchful age is ready to surmise)
 Are still at hand ; and this, reveal'd, must be
 Death to yourselves, eternal chains to me.
 Your vessel loaded, and your traffick past, 485
 Dispatch a wary messenger with haste :
 Then gold and costly treasures will I bring,
 And more, the infant-offspring of the king.
 Him, child-like wandering forth, I 'll lead away,
 (A noble prize !) and to your ship convey. 490
 Thus spoke the dame, and homeward took the road,
 A year they traffick, and their vessel load,
 Their stores complete, and ready now to weigh,
 A spy was sent their summons to convey :
 An artist to my father's palace came, 495
 With gold and amber chains, elaborate frame :
 Each female eye the glittering links employ,
 They turn, review, and cheapen every toy.
 He took th' occasion as they stood intent,
 Gave her the sign, and to his vessel went. 500
 She straight pursued, and seiz'd my willing arm ;
 I follow'd smiling, innocent of harm.
 Three golden goblets in the porch she found
 (The guests not enter'd, but the table crown'd) ;

Hid in her fraudulent bosom, these she bore : 505
 Now set the sun, and darken'd all the shore.
 Arriving then, where tilting on the tides
 Prepar'd to launch the freighted vessel rides ;
 Aboard they heave us, mount their decks, and sweep
 With level oar along the glassy deep. 510
 Six calmy days and six smooth nights we sail,
 And constant Jove supplied the gentle gale.
 The seventh, the fraudulent wretch, (no cause discried)
 Touch'd by Diana's vengeful arrow, died.
 Down dropp'd the eastiff-corse, a worthless load,
 Down to the deep ; there roll'd, the future food }
 Of fierce sea-wolves, and monsters of the flood.
 An helpless infant, I remain'd behind ;
 Thence borne to Ithaca by wave and wind ;
 Sold to Laertes, by divine command, 520
 And now adopted to a foreign land.
 To him the king : Reciting thus thy cares,
 My secret soul in all thy sorrows shares :
 But one choice blessing (such is Jove's high will)
 Has sweeten'd all thy bitter draught of ill : 525
 Torn from thy country to no hapless end,
 The Gods have, in a master, given a friend.
 Whatever frugal nature needs is thine,
 (For she needs little) daily bread and wine.
 While I, so many wanderings past and woes, 530
 Live but on what thy poverty bestows.
 So pass'd in pleasing dialogue away
 The night ; then down to short repose they lay ; }
 Till radiant rose the messenger of day.

While

While in the port of Ithaca, the band 535
Of young Telemachus approach'd the land;
Their sails they loos'd, they lash'd the mast aside,
And cast their anchors, and the cables tied:
Then on the breezy shore descending join
In grateful banquet o'er the rosy wine. 540

When thus the prince: Now each his course pursue;
I to the fields, and to the city you.
Long absent hence, I dedicate this day
My swains to visit, and the works survey.
Expect me with the morn, to pay the skies 545
Our debt of safe return, in feast and sacrifice.

Then Theoclymenus: But who shall lend,
Meantime, protection to thy stranger-friend?
Straight to the queen and palace shall I fly,
Or, yet more distant, to some lord apply? 550

The prince return'd: Renown'd in days of yore
Has stood our father's hospitable door;
No other roof a stranger should receive,
Nor other hands than ours the welcome give.
But in my absence riot fills the place, 555
Nor bears the modest queen a stranger's face;
From noisy revel far remote she flies,
But rarely seen, or seen with weeping eyes.
No—let Eurymachus receive my guest,
Of nature courteous, and by far the best; 560
He wooes the queen with more respectful flame,
And emulates her former husband's fame:
With what success, 'tis Jove's alone to know,
And the hop'd nuptials turn to joy or woe.

Thus speaking, on the right up-soar'd in air 565
 The hawk, Apollo's swift-wing'd messenger ;
 His deathful pounces tore a trembling dove ;
 The clotted feathers, scatter'd from above,
 Between the hero and the vessel pour
 Thick plumage, mingled with a sanguine shower.

Th' observing augur took the prince aside,
 Seiz'd by the hand, and thus prophetic cried :
 Yon bird that dexter cuts th' aërial road,
 Rose ominous, nor flies without a God :
 No race but thine shall Ithaca obey, 575
 To thine, for ages, Heaven decrees the sway.
 Succeed the omen, Gods ! (the youth rejoin'd)
 Soon shall my bounties speak a grateful mind,
 And soon each envied happiness attend
 The man, who calls Telemachus his friend. 580
 Then to Peiræus—Thou whom time has prov'd
 A faithful servant, by thy prince belov'd !
 Till we returning shall our guest demand,
 Accept this charge with honour at our hand.

To this Peiræus : Joyful I obey, 585
 Well pleas'd the hospitable rites to pay,
 The presence of thy guest shall best reward
 (If long thy stay) the absence of my lord.

With that their anchors he commands to weigh,
 Mount the tall bark, and launch into the sea. 590
 All with obedient haste forsake the shores,
 And, plac'd in order, spread their equal oars.
 Then from the deck the prince his sandals takes ;
 Pois'd in his hand the pointed javelin shakes.

They

They part; while, lessening from the hero's view,
 Swift to the town the well-row'd galley flew :
 The hero trod the margin of the main,
 And reach'd the mansion of his faithful swain,

And reach the mansion of the faintest star,
The hero used the margin of the sea,
Swift to the shore he well had gained before
They pass; while labouring from the boat's stern,

THE
SIXTEENTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.



ARGUMENT.

THE DISCOVERY OF ULYSSES TO TELEMACHUS.

TELEMACHUS arriving at the lodge of Eumæus sends him to carry Penelope the news of his return, Minerva appearing to Ulysses commands him to discover himself to his son. The princes, who had lain in ambush to intercept Telemachus in his way, their project being defeated, return to Ithaca.



As some fond fire, who ten long winters grieves,
From foreign climes an only son receives,
(Child of his age) with strong paternal joy
Forward he springs, and clasps the favourite boy : 20
So round the youth his arms Eumæus spread,
As if the grave had given him from the dead.

And is it thou ! my ever-dear delight !
 Oh, art thou come to bless my longing sight !
 Never, I never hop'd to view this day, 25
 When o'er the waves you plough'd the desperate way.
 Enter, my child ! beyond my hopes restor'd,
 Oh give these eyes to feast upon their lord !
 Enter, oh seldom seen ! for lawless powers
 Too much detain thee from these sylvan bowers. 30

The prince replied : Eumæus, I obey ;
 To seek thee, friend, I hither took my way.
 But say, if in the court the queen reside,
 Severely chaste, or if commenc'd a bride ?

Thus he : and thus the monarch of the swains : 35
 Severely chaste Penelope remains ;
 But, lost to every joy, she wastes the day
 In tedious cares, and weeps the night away.

He ended ; and (receiving as they pass
 The javelin, pointed with a star of brass) 40
 They reach'd the dome ; the dome with marble shin'd.
 His seat Ulysses to the prince resign'd.
 Not so—(exclaims the prince with decent grace)
 For me, this house shall find an humbler place :
 T' usurp the honours due to silver hairs 45
 And reverend strangers, modest youth forbears.
 Instant the swain the spoils of beasts supplies,
 And bids the rural throne with ozers rise.
 There sate the prince : the feast Eumæus spread,
 And heap'd the shining canisters with bread. 50
 Thick o'er the board the plenteous viands lay,
 The frugal remnants of the former day.

Then

Then in a bowl he tempers generous wines,
 Around whose verge a mimic ivy twines.
 And now, the rage of thirst and hunger fled, 55
 Thus young Ulysses to Eumæus said :

Whence, father, from what shore this stranger, say,
 What vessel bore him o'er the watery way?
 To human step our land impervious lies,
 And round the coast circumfluent oceans rise. 60

The swain returns : A tale of sorrows hear :
 In spacious Crete he drew his natal air,
 Long doom'd to wander o'er the land and main,
 For Heaven has wove his thread of life with pain.
 Half-breathless 'scaping to the land he flew 65
 From Thesprot mariners, a murderous crew.
 To thee, my son, the suppliant I resign ;
 I gave him my protection, grant him thine.

Hard task, he cries, thy virtue gives thy friend,
 Willing to aid, unable to defend. 70

Can strangers safely in the court reside,
 Midst the swell'd insolence of lust and pride?
 Ev'n I unsafe : the queen in doubt to wed,
 Or pay due honours to the nuptial bed :
 Perhaps she weds regardless of her fame, 75
 Deaf to the mighty Ulyssæan name.

However, stranger, from our grace receive
 Such honours as besit a prince to give ;
 Sandals, a sword, and robes, respect to prove,
 And safe to sail with ornaments of love. 80

Till then, thy guest amid the rural train,
 Far from the court, from danger far, detain.

'Tis

'Tis mine with food the hungry to supply,
 And cloath the naked from th' inclement sky.
 Here dwell in safety from the suitors wrongs, 85
 And the rude insults of ungovern'd tongues.
 For should'st thou suffer, powerless to relieve,
 I must behold it, and can only grieve.

The brave encompass'd by an hostile train,
 O'erpower'd by numbers, is but brave in vain. 90

To whom, while anger in his bosom glows,
 With warmth replies the man of mighty woes :
 Since audience mild is deign'd, permit my tongue
 At once to pity and resent thy wrong.

My heart weeps blood to see a soul so brave 95
 Live to base insolence of power a slave.

But tell me, dost thou, prince, dost thou behold,
 And hear, their midnight revels uncontrol'd ?

Say, do thy subjects in bold faction rise,
 Or priests in fabled oracles advise? 100

Or are thy brothers, who should aid thy power,
 Turn'd mean deserters in the needful hour ?

Oh! that I were from great Ulysses sprung,
 Or that these wither'd nerves like thine were strung ;
 Or, Heavens! might he return ! (and soon appear 105
 He shall, I trust ; a hero scorns despair !)

Might he return, I yield my life a prey
 To my worst foe, if that avenging day
 Be not their last : but should I lose my life
 Oppress'd by numbers in the glorious strife, 110

I chuse the nobler part, and yield my breath,
 Rather than bear dishonour, worse than death ;

Than

Than see the hand of violence invade
The reverend stranger, and the spotless maid ;
Then see the wealth of kings consum'd in waste, 115
The drunkards revel, and the gluttons feast.

Thus he, with anger flashing from his eye ;
Sincere the youthful hero made reply :
Nor leagued in factious arms my subjects rise,
Nor priests in fabled oracles advise ; 120
Nor are my brothers who should aid my power
Turn'd mean deserters in the needful hour.

Ah me ! I boast no brother ; Heaven's dread King
Gives from our stock an only branch to spring :
Alone Laertes reign'd Arcefus' heir, 125
Alone Ulysses drew the vital air,

And I alone the bed connubial grac'd,
An unblest'd offspring of a sire unblest !
Each neighbouring realm, conducive to our woe,
Sends forth her peers, and every peer a foe : 130

The court proud Samos and Dulichium fills,
And lofty Zacynth crown'd with shady hills,
Ev'n Ithaca and all her lords invade
Th' imperial sceptre, and the regal bed :

The queen, averse to love, yet aw'd by power, 135
Seems half to yield, yet flies the bridal hour !
Meantime their licence uncontrol'd I bear ;
Ev'n now they envy me the vital air :
But Heaven will sure revenge, and Gods there are. } 140

But go, Eumæus ! to the queen impart
Our safe return, and ease a mother's heart.
Yet secret go ; for numerous are my foes,
And here at least I may in peace repose.

To whom the swain ; I hear, and I obey :
 But old Laertes weeps his life away, 145
 And deems thee lost : shall I my speed employ
 To bless his age ; a messenger of joy ?
 The mournful hour that tore his son away
 Sent the sad fire in solitude to stray ;
 Yet, busied with his slaves, to ease his woe, 150
 He dress'd the vine, and bade the garden blow,
 Nor food nor wine refus'd : but since the day
 That you to Pylos plough'd the watery way,
 Nor wine nor food he tastes ; but sunk in woes,
 Wild springs the vine, no more the garden blows : 155
 Shut from the walks of men, to pleasure lost,
 Pensive and pale he wanders, half a ghost.

Wretched old man ! (with tears the prince returns)
 Yet cease to go—what man so blest but mourns ?
 Were every wish indulg'd by favouring skies, 160
 This hour should give Ulysses to my eyes.
 But to the queen with speed dispatchful bear
 Our safe return, and back with speed repair :
 And let some handmaid of her train resort
 To good Laertes in his rural court. 165

While yet he spoke, impatient of delay,
 He brac'd his sandals on, and strode away :
 Then from the heavens the Martial Goddess flies
 Through the wide fields of air, and cleaves the skies ;
 In form a virgin in soft beauty's bloom, 170
 Skill'd in th' illustrious labours of the loom.
 Alone to Ithacus she stood display'd,
 But unapparent as a viewless shade

Escap'd

Escap'd Telemachus (the Powers above,
Seen or unseen, o'er earth at pleasure move) : 175
The dogs intelligent confess'd the tread
Of power divine ; and, howling, trembling, fled.
The Goddess, beckoning, waves her deathless hands ;
Dauntless the king before the Goddess stands.

Then why (she said) O favour'd of the skies ! 180
Why to thy god-like son this long disguise ?
Stand forth reveal'd : with him thy cares employ
Against thy foes ; be valiant, and destroy !
Lo ! I descend in that avenging hour,
To combat by thy side, thy guardian Power. 185

She said, and o'er him waves her wand of gold ;
Imperial robes his manly limbs infold ;
At once with grace divine his frame improves :
At once with majesty enlarg'd he moves :
Youth flush'd his reddening cheek, and from his brows
A length of hair in fable ringlets flows ;
His blackening chin receives a deeper shade ;
Then from his eyes upsprung the Warriour-Maid.

The hero re-ascends : the prince o'eraw'd
Scarce lifts his eyes, and bows as to a God. 195
Then with surprize (surprize chastis'd by fears)
How art thou chang'd ! (he cry'd) a God appears !
Far other vests thy limbs majestic grace,
Far other glories lighten from thy face !
If Heaven be thy abode, with pious care 200
Lo ! I the ready sacrifice prepare :
Lo ! gifts of labour'd gold adorn thy shrine,
To win thy grace : Oh save us, Power Divine !

Few are my days, Ulysses made reply,
 Nor I, alas ! descendant of the sky. 205
 I am thy father. Oh my son ! my son !
 That father, for whose sake thy days have run
 One scene of woe ; to endless cares consign'd,
 And outrag'd by the wrongs of base mankind.
 Then rushing to his arms, he kiss'd his boy 210
 With the strong raptures of a parent's joy.
 Tears bathe his cheek, and tears the ground bedew :
 He strain'd him close, as to his breast he grew.
 Ah me ! (exclaims the prince with fond desire)
 Thou art not—no, thou canst not be my sire. 215
 Heaven such illusion only can impose,
 By the false joy to aggravate my woes.
 Who but a God can change the general doom,
 And give to wither'd age a youthful bloom ?
 Late, worn with years, in weeds obscure you trod ;
 Now, cloath'd in majesty, you move a God !
 Forbear, he cry'd ; for Heaven reserve that name,
 Give to thy father, but a father's claim :
 Other Ulysses shalt thou never see,
 I am Ulysses, I (my son) am he. 225
 Twice ten sad years o'er earth and ocean tost,
 'Tis given at length to view my native coast.
 Pallas, unconquer'd Maid, my frame surrounds
 With grace divine ; her power admits no bounds :
 She o'er my limbs old age and wrinkles shed ; 230
 Now, strong as youth, magnificent I tread.
 The Gods with ease frail man depress or raise,
 Exalt the lowly, or the proud debase.

He

He spoke, and sate. The prince with transport flew,
Hung round his neck, while tears his cheek bedew:
Nor less the father pour'd a social flood!
They wept abundant, and they wept aloud.
As the bold eagle with fierce sorrow stung,
Or parent vulture, mourns her ravish'd young;
They cry, they scream, their unfledg'd brood a prey
To some rude churl, and borne by stealth away;
So they aloud: and tears in tides had run,
Their grief unfinish'd with the setting sun:
But checking the full torrent in its flow,
The prince thus interrupts the solemn woe. 245
What ship transported thee, O father, say,
And what bless'd hands have oar'd thee on the way?

All, all (Ulysses instant made reply)
I tell thee all, my child, my only joy!
Phæacians bore me to the port assign'd, 250
A nation ever to the stranger kind;
Wrapp'd in th' embrace of sleep, the faithful train
O'er seas convey'd me to my native reign:
Embroider'd vestures, gold, and bras, are laid
Conceal'd in caverns in the sylvan shade. 255
Hither, intent the rival rout to slay,
And plan the scene of death, I bend my way:
So Pallas wills—but thou, my son, explain
The names and numbers of th' audacious train;
'Tis mine to judge if better to employ 260
Assistent force, or singly to destroy.

O'er earth (returns the prince) resounds thy name,
Thy well-tried wisdom, and thy martial fame,

Yet

Yet at thy words I start, in wonder lost;
 Can we engage, not decads, but an host? 265
 Can we alone in furious battle stand,
 Against that numerous and determin'd band?
 Hear then their numbers: from Dulichium came
 Twice twenty-six, all peers of mighty name,
 Six are their menial train: twice twelve the boast 270
 Of Samos; twenty from Zacynthus coast:
 And twelve our country's pride: to these belong
 Medon and Phemius skill'd in heavenly song.
 Two sewers from day to day the revels wait,
 Exact of taste, and serve the feast in state. 275
 With such a foe th' unequal fight to try,
 Were by false courage unreveng'd to die.
 Then what assistant powers your boast, relate,
 Ere yet we mingle in the stern debate.

Mark well my voice, Ulysses straight replies: 280
 What need of aids, if favour'd by the skies?
 If shielded to the dreadful fight we move,
 By mighty Pallas, and by thundering Jove.

Sufficient they (Telemachus rejoin'd)
 Against the banded powers of all mankind: 285
 They, high enthron'd above the rolling clouds;
 Wither the strength of man, and awe the Gods.

Such aids expect, he cries, when strong in might
 We rise terrific to the task of fight.
 But thou, when morn salutes th' aerial plain, 290
 The court revisit and the lawless train:
 Me thither in disguise Eumæus leads.
 An aged mendicant in tatter'd weeds.

There, if base scorn insult my reverend age;
 Bear it, my son ! repress thy rising rage. 295
 If outrag'd, cease that outrage to repel;
 Bear it, my son ! howe'er thy heart rebel.
 Yet strive by prayer and counsel to restrain
 Their lawless insults, though thou strive in vain :
 For wicked ears are deaf to Wisdom's call, 300
 And vengeance strikes whom Heaven has doom'd to fall.
 Once more attend : When * She whose power inspires
 The thinking mind, my soul to vengeance fires ;
 I give the sign : that instant, from beneath,
 Aloft convey the instruments of death, 305
 Armour and arms ; and if mistrust arise,
 Thus veil the truth in plausible disguise :

" These glittering weapons, ere he sail'd to Troy,
 " Ulysses view'd with stern heroic joy :
 " Then, beaming o'er th' illumin'd wall they shone :
 " Now dust dishonours, all their lustre gone.
 " I bear them hence (so Jove my soul inspires)
 " From the pollution of the fuming fires ;
 " Left, when the bowl inflames, in vengeful mood
 " Ye rush to arms, and stain the feast with blood :
 " Oft ready swords in luckless hour incite
 " The hand of wrath, and arm it for the fight."

Such be the plea, and by the plea deceive :
 For Jove infatuates all, and all believe.
 Yet leave for each of us a sword to wield, 320
 A pointed javelin, and a fenceful shield.
 But by my blood that in thy bosom glows,
 By that regard, a son his father owes ;

The secret, that thy father lives, retain
 Lock'd in thy bosom from the household train; 335
 Hide it from all; ev'n from Eumæus hide,
 From my dear father, and my dearer bride.
 One care remains, to note the loyal few
 Whose faith yet lasts among the menial crew;
 And, noting, ere we rise in vengeance, prove 339
 Who loves his prince; for sure you merit love.

To whom the youth: To emulate I aim
 The brave and wise, and my great father's fame.
 But re-consider, since the wisest err,
 Vengeance resolv'd, 'tis dangerous to defer. 335
 What length of time must we consume in vain,
 Too curious to explore the menial train?
 While the proud foes, industrious to destroy
 Thy wealth in riot, the delay enjoy.
 Suffice it in this exigence alone 340

To mark the damsels that attend the throne:
 Dispers'd the youth resides; their faith to prove
 Jove grants henceforth, if thou hast spoke from Jove.

While in debate they waste the hours away,
 Th' associates of the prince repass'd the bay; 345
 With speed they guide the vessel to the shores;
 With speed debarking land the naval stores;
 Then, faithful to their charge, to Clytius bear,
 And trust the presents to his friendly care.
 Swift to the queen a herald flies t' impart 350
 Her son's return, and ease a parent's heart;
 Left, a sad prey to ever-musing cares,
 Pale grief destroy what time a-while forbears.

Th'

Th' uncautious herald with impatience burns,
 And cries aloud : Thy son, O Queen, returns : 355
 Eumæus sage approach'd th' imperial throne,
 And breath'd his mandate to her ear alone,
 Then measur'd back the way—The suitor band,
 Stung to the soul, abash'd, confounded, stand ;
 And issuing from the dome, before the gate, 360
 With clouded looks, a pale assembly sate.

At length Eurymachus : Our hopes are vain ;
 Telemachus in triumph sails the main.
 Haste, rear the mast, the swelling shroud display ;
 Haste, to our ambush'd friends the news convey. 365

Scarce had he spoke, when, turning to the strand,
 Amphinomus survey'd th' associate band ;
 Full to the bay within the winding shores
 With gather'd sails they stood, and lifted oars.
 O friends ! he cry'd, elate with rising joy, 370
 See to the port secure the vessel fly !
 Some God has told them, or themselves survey
 The bark escap'd ; and measure back their way.

Swift at the word descending to the shores,
 They moor the vessel and unlade the stores : 375
 Then moving from the strand, apart they sate,
 And full and frequent, form'd a dire debate.

Lives then the boy ? he lives (Antinous cries)
 The care of Gods and favourite of the skies.
 All night we watch'd, till with her orient wheels 380
 Aurora flam'd above the eastern hills,
 And from the lofty brow of rocks by day
 Took-in the ocean with a broad survey :

Yet safe he sails ! the Powers celestial give
 To shun the hidden snares of death, and live. 385
 But die he shall, and thus condemn'd to bleed,
 Be now the scene of instant death decreed :
 Hope ye success ? undaunted crush the foe.
 Is he not wise ? know this, and strike the blow.
 Wait ye, till he to arms in council draws 390
 The Greeks, averse too justly to our cause ?
 Strike ere, the states conven'd, the foe betray
 Our murderous ambush on the watery way.
 Or chuse ye vagrant from their rage to fly
 Outcasts of earth, to breathe an unknown sky ? 395
 The brave prevent misfortune ; then be brave,
 And bury future danger in his grave.
 Returns he ? ambush'd we 'll his walk invade,
 Or where he hides in solitude and shade :
 And give the palace to the queen a dower, 400
 Or him she blesses in the bridal hour.
 But if submissive you resign the sway,
 Slaves to a boy ; go, flatter and obey.
 Retire we instant to our native reign,
 Nor be the wealth of kings consum'd in vain ; 405
 Then wed whom choice approves : the queen be given
 To some blest prince, the prince decreed by Heaven.
 Abash'd, the suitor train his voice attends ;
 Till from his throne Amphinomus ascends,
 Who o'er Dulichium stretch'd his spacious reign, 410
 A land of plenty, blest with every grain :
 Chief of the numbers who the queen address'd,
 And though displeasing, yet displeasing least.

Soft were his words; his actions wisdom sway'd;
Graceful a-while he paus'd, then mildly said: 415

O friends, forbear! and be the thought withstood:
'Tis horrible to shed imperial blood!
Consult we first th' all seeing powers above,
And the sure oracles of righteous Jove.
If they assent, ev'n by this hand he dies; 420
If they forbid, I war not with the skies.

He said: The rival train his voice approv'd,
And rising instant to the palace mov'd.
Arriv'd, with wild tumultuous noise they sate,
Recumbent on the shining thrones of state. 425

The Medon, conscious of their dire debates,
The murderous council to the queen relates.
Touch'd at the dreadful story she descends:
Her hasty steps a damsel-train attends.
Full where the dome its shining valves expands, 430
Sudden before the rival powers she stands:
And, veiling decent with a modest shade
Her cheek, indignant to Antinous said:

O void of faith! of all bad men the worst!
Renown'd for wisdom, by th' abuse accus'd! 435
Mistaking fame proclaims thy generous mind!
Thy deeds denote thee of the basest kind.
Wretch! to destroy a prince that friendship gives,
While in his guest his murderer he receives:
Nor dread superior Jove, to whom belong 440
The cause of suppliants, and revenge of wrong.
Hast thou forgot (ingrateful as thou art)
Who sav'd thy father with a friendly part?

Lawless he ravag'd with his martial powers
 The Taphyan pirates on Thesprotia's shores ; 44;
 Enrag'd, his life, his treasures they demand ;
 Ulysses sav'd him from th' avenger's hand.

And would'st thou evil for his good repay ?
 His bed dishonour, and his house betray ?
 Afflict his queen ? and with a murderous hand 450
 Destroy his heir ?—but cease, 'tis I command.

Far hence those fears, (Eurymachus reply'd)
 O prudent prince ! bid thy soul confide.
 Breathes there a man who dares that hero slay,
 While I behold the golden light of day ? 455

No : by the righteous Powers of Heaven I swear,
 His blood in vengeance smokes upon my spear.

Ulysses, when my infant-days I led,
 With wine suffic'd me, and with dainties fed :
 My generous soul abhors th' ungrateful part, 460
 And my friend's son lives dearest to my heart.

Then fear no mortal arm ; if Heaven destroy,
 We must resign : for man is born to die.

Thus smooth he ended, yet his death conspir'd :
 Then sorrowing, with sad step the queen retir'd, 465
 With streaming eyes all comfortless deplor'd,
 Touch'd with the dear remembrance of her lord :
 Nor ceas'd till Pallas bid her sorrows fly,
 And in soft slumber seal'd her flowing eye.

And now Eumæus, at the evening hour, 470
 Came late returning to his sylvan bower.
 Ulysses and his son had dress'd with art
 A yearling boar, and gave the Gods their part,

Holy

Holy repast ! That instant from the skies
 The Martial Goddess to Ulysses flies : 475
 She waves her golden wand, and re-assumes
 From every feature every grace that blooms ;
 At once his vestures change ; at once she sheds
 Age o'er his limbs, that tremble as he treads ;
 Left to the queen the swain with transport fly, 480
 Unable to contain th' unruly joy.

When near he drew, the prince breaks forth : Proclaim
 What tidings, friend ? what speaks the voice of Fame ?
 Say, if the suitors measure back the main,
 Or still in ambush thirst for blood in vain ? 485

Whether, he cries, they measure back the flood,
 Or still in ambush thirst in vain for blood,
 Escap'd my care : where lawless suitors sway,
 Thy mandate borne, my soul disdain'd to stay.
 But from th' Hermæan height I cast a view, 490
 Where to the port a bark high bounding flew ;
 Her freight a shining band : with martial air
 Each pois'd his shield, and each advanc'd his spear :
 And, if aright these searching eyes survey,
 Th' eluded suitors stem the watery way. 495

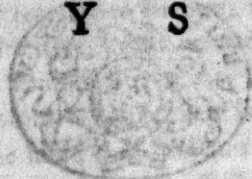
The prince, well pleas'd to disappoint their wiles,
 Steals on his fire a glance, and secret smiles.
 And now, a short repast prepar'd, they fed,
 Till the keen rage of craving hunger fled,
 Then to repose withdrawn, apart they lay,
 And in soft sleep forgot the cares of day. 500

Help repair : That instant from the floor
The Marital Good, to Olympe's door
She waves her golden wand, and all around
From every feature every grace that shines
At once the features change : At once the flesh
Age o'er his limbs, that female as in words
Led to the queen the twin with instant joy
Unable to contain in unity joy
When near he drew, the prince's face (said) : Pothos
What things, friend, what things, the voice of Iamus
Say if this is the person back the throne
Or still in radiant youth for Iliad's sake
Whatever he cries, they all obey the gods
Or still in a state of rain for Iliad's sake
Krag's my care : where I have Iliad's sake
I lay my hands on my foot and I say
But from the Iliad's sake
Where to the port a bark is bound now
Her feelings a young hand : who knows
Each part of his shield, and each corner of his spear
And, it might be to Iliad's sake
The prince, well placed in the queen's then with
Stood on his feet a glance, and Iliad's sake
And now, a short report of Iliad's sake
Till the keen eye of Iliad's sake
Then to report what Iliad's sake
And in Iliad's sake the care of Iliad's sake

4 AP 54

THE
SEVENTEENTH BOOK

OF THE
ODYSSEY.



A R G U M E N T.

TELEMACHUS returning to the city relates to Penelope the sum of his travels. Ulysses is conducted by Eumæus to the palace, where his old dog Argus acknowledges his master, after an absence of twenty years, and dies with joy. Eumæus returns into the country, and Ulysses remains among the suitors, whose behaviour is described.



THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVII.

SOON as Aurora, daughter of the dawn,
 Sprinkled with roseate light the dewy lawn;
 In haste the prince arose, prepar'd to part;
 His hand impatient grasps the pointed dart;
 Fair on his feet the polish'd sandals shine,
 And thus he greets the master of the swine:

My friend, adieu; let this short stay suffice;
 I haste to meet my mother's longing eyes,
 And end her tears, her sorrows, and her sighs.
 But thou, attentive, what we order heed;
 This hapless stranger to the city lead;
 By public bounty let him there be fed,
 And bless the hand that stretches forth the bread.
 To wipe the tears from all afflicted eyes,
 My will may covet, but my power denies.
 If this raise anger in the stranger's thought,
 The pain of anger punishes the fault;
 The very truth I undisguis'd declare;
 For what so easy as to be sincere?

To this Ulysses: What the prince requires
 Of swift removal, seconds my desires.
 To want like mine the peopled town can yield
 More hopes of comfort than the lonely field.

Nor fits my age to till the labour'd lands,
 Or stoop to tasks a rural lord demands. 25
 Adieu! but, since this ragged garb can bear
 So ill th' inclemencies of morning air,
 A few hours space permit me here to stay;
 My steps Eumæus shall to town convey,
 With riper beams when Phoebus warms the day. }

Thus he: nor aught Telemachus reply'd,
 But left the mansion with a lofty stride:
 Schemes of revenge his pondering breast elate,
 Revolving deep the suitors' sudden fate.
 Arriving now before th' imperial hall; 35
 He props his spear against the pillar'd wall;
 Then like a lion o'er the threshold bounds;
 The marble pavement with his step resounds;
 His eye first glanc'd where Euryclea spreads
 With furry spoils of beasts the splendid beds: 40
 She saw, she wept, she ran with eager pace,
 And reach'd her master with a long embrace.
 All crouded round the family appears
 With wild entrancement, and extatic tears.
 Swift from above descends the royal fair
 (Her beauteous cheeks the blush of Venus wear,
 Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air);
 Hangs o'er her son; in his embraces dies;
 Rains kisses on his neck, his face, his eyes:
 Few words she spoke, though much she had to say;
 And scarce those few, for tears, could force their way.
 Light of my eyes! he comes! unhop'd-for joy!
 Has Heaven from Pylos brought my lovely boy?

So snatch'd from all our cares !—Tell, hast thou known
Thy father's fate ? and tell me all thy own. 55

Oh dearest, most rever'd of womankind !
Cease with those tears to melt a manly mind
(Replied the prince) ; nor be our fates deplor'd,
From death and treason to thy arms restor'd.

Go bathe, and, rob'd in white, ascend the towers ; 60
With all thy handmaids thank th' immortal Powers ;
To every God vow hecatombs to bleed,
And call Jove's vengeance on their guilty deed.

While to th' assembled council I repair ;
A stranger sent by Heaven attends me there ; 65
My new-accepted guest I haste to find,
Now to Piræus' honour'd charge consign'd.

The matron heard, nor was his word in vain.
She bath'd ; and, rob'd in white, with all her train,
To every God vow'd hecatombs to bleed, 70
And call'd Jove's vengeance on the guilty deed.

Arm'd with his lance, the prince then pass'd the gate ;
Two dogs behind, a faithful guard, await ;
Pallas his form with grace divine improves :
The gazing croud admires him as he moves : 75

Him, gathering round, the haughty suitors greet
With semblance fair, but inward deep deceit.
Their false addresses generous he denied,
Pass'd on, and fate by faithful Mentor's side ;

With Antiphus, and Halitherfes sage 80
(His father's counsellors, rever'd for age).
Of his own fortunes, and Ulysses' fame,
Much ask'd the seniors ; till Piræus came.

The stranger-guest pursued him close behind ;
 Whom when Telemachus beheld, he join'd. 85
 He (when Piræus ask'd for slaves to bring
 The gifts and treasures of the Spartan king)
 Thus thoughtful answer'd : Those we shall not move,
 Dark and unconscious of the will of Jove :
 We know not yet the full event of all : 90
 Stabb'd in his palace if your prince must fall,
 Us, and our house, if treason must o'erthrow,
 Better a friend possess them, than a foe ;
 If death to these, and vengeance Heaven decree,
 Riches are welcome then, not else, to me. 95
 Till then retain the gifts.—The hero said,
 And in his hand the willing stranger led.
 Then dis-array'd, the shining bath they sought,
 (With unguents smooth) of polish'd marble wrought ;
 Obedient handmaids with assistant toil 100
 Supply the limpid wave, and fragrant oil :
 Then o'er their limbs refulgent robes they threw,
 And fresh from bathing to their seats withdrew,
 The golden ewer a nymph attendant brings,
 Replenish'd from the pure translucent springs ; 105
 With copious streams that golden ewer supplies
 A silver laver of capacious size :
 They wash : the table, in fair order spread,
 Is pil'd with viands and the strength of bread.
 Full opposite, before the folding-gate, 110
 The pensive mother sits in humble state ;
 Lowly she sate, and with dejected view
 The fleecy threads her ivory fingers drew.

The

The prince and stranger shar'd the genial feast,
Till now the rage of thirst and hunger ceas'd. 115

When thus the queen: My son! my only friend!
Say, to my mournful couch shall I ascend?

(The couch deserted now a length of years;
The couch for ever water'd with my tears!)

Say, wilt thou not (ere yet the suitor-crew
Return, and riot shakes our walls anew) 120

Say, wilt thou not the least account afford?
The least glad tidings of my absent lord?

To her the youth: We reach'd the Pylian plains,
Where Nestor, shepherd of his people, reigns. 125

All arts of tenderness to him are known,
Kind to Ulysses' race as to his own;

No father with a fonder grasp of joy
Strains to his bosom his long-absent boy.

But all unknown, if yet Ulysses breathe,
Or glide a spectre in the realms beneath; 130

For farther search, his rapid steeds transport
My lengthen'd journey to the Spartan court.

There Argive Helen I beheld, whose charms
(So Heaven decreed) engag'd the great in arms, 135

My cause of coming told, he thus rejoin'd;
And still his words live perfect in my mind.

Heavens! would a soft, inglorious, dastard train
An absent hero's nuptial joys profane!

So with her young, amid the woodland shades, 140
A timorous hind the lion's court invades,

Leaves in that fatal lair her tender fawns,
And climbs the cliff, or feeds along the lawns;

Mean-

Meantime returning, with remorseless sway
 The monarch savage rends the panting prey : 145
 With equal fury, and with equal fame,
 Shall great Ulysses re-assert his claim.
 O Jove ! Supreme ! whom men and Gods revere ;
 And thou whose lustre gilds the rolling sphere !
 With power congenial join'd, propitious aid 150
 The chief adopted by the Martial Maid !
 Such to our wish the warrior soon restore,
 As when, contending on the Lesbian shore,
 His prowess Philomelides confess'd,
 And loud-acclaiming Greeks the victor bless'd : 155
 Then soon th' invaders of his bed and throne
 Their love presumptuous shall by death atone ;
 Now what you question of my ancient friend,
 With truth I answer ; thou the truth attend.
 Learn what I heard the * sea-born seer relate, 160
 Whose eyes can pierce the dark recess of fate.
 Sole in an isle, imprison'd by the main,
 The sad survivor of his numerous train,
 Ulysses lies ; detain'd by magic charms,
 And press'd unwilling in Calypso's arms. 165
 No sailors there, no vessels to convey,
 Nor oars to cut th' immeasurable way—
 This told Atrides and he told no more.
 Thence safe I voyag'd to my native shore.
 He ceas'd ; nor made the pensive queen reply, 170
 But droop'd her head, and drew a secret sigh.
 When Theoclymenus the seer began :
 O suffering consort of the suffering man !

What

* Proteus.

What human knowledge could, those kings might tell ;
But I the secrets of high Heaven reveal. 175

Before the first of Gods be this declar'd,
Before the board whose blessing we have shar'd ;
Witness the genial rites, and witness all
This house holds sacred in her ample wall !
Ev'n now this instant, great Ulysses lay'd 180

At rest, or wandering in his country's shade,
Their guilty deeds, in hearing, and in view,
Secret revolves ; and plans the vengeance due.
Of this sure auguries the Gods bestow'd,
When first our vessel anchor'd in your road. 185

Succeed those omens, Heaven ! (the queen rejoin'd)
So shall our bounties speak a grateful mind ;
And every envied happiness attend
The man, who calls Penelope his friend.

Thus commun'd they : while in the marble court
(Scene of their insolence) the lords resort ;
Athwart the spacious square each tries his art,
To whirl the disk, or aim the missile dart.

Now did the hour of sweet repast arrive,
And from the field the victim flocks they drive : 190

Medon the herald (one who pleas'd them best,
And honour'd with a portion of their feast)
To bid the banquet, interrupts their play.
Swift to the hall they haste ; aside they lay
Their garments, and, succinct, the victims slay. }

Then sheep and goats, and bristly pokers bled,
And the proud steer was o'er the marble spread.

While thus the copious banquet they provide ;
Along the road conversing side by side,

Proceed Ulysses and the faithful swain : 205

When thus Eumæus, generous and humane :

To town, observant of our lord's behest,

Now let us speed ; my friend, no more my guest !

Yet like myself I wish'd thee here preferr'd,

Guard of the flock, or keeper of the herd. 210

But much to raise my master's wrath I fear ;

The wrath of princes ever is severe.

Then heed his will, and be our journey made

While the broad beams of Phœbus are display'd,

Or ere brown evening spreads her chilly shade. }

Just thy advice, (the prudent chief rejoin'd)

And such as suits the dictate of my mind.

Lead on : but help me to some staff, to stay

My feeble step, since rugged is the way.

Across his shoulders then the scrip he flung, 220

Wide-patch'd, and fasten'd by a twisted thong.

A staff Eumæus gave. Along the way

Cheerly they fare : behind, the keepers stay ;

These with their watchful dogs (a constant guard)

Supply his absence, and attend the herd, 225

And now his city strikes the monarch's eyes,

Alas ! how chang'd ! a man of miseries ;

Propp'd on a staff, a beggar old and bare,

In rags dishonest fluttering with the air !

Now pass'd the rugged road, they journey down 230

The cavern'd way descending to the town,

Where, from the rock, with liquid lapse distills

A limpid fount ; that, spread in parting rills,

Its current thence to serve the city brings :

An useful work adorn'd by ancient kings, 235

Neritus,

Neritus, Ithacus, Polyctor, there,
In sculptur'd stone immortaliz'd their care,
In marble urns receiv'd it from above,
And shaded with a green surrounding grove;
Where silver alders, in high arches twin'd, 240
Drink the cold stream, and tremble to the wind.
Beneath, sequester'd to the nymphs, is seen
A mossy altar, deep embower'd in green;
Where constant vows by travellers are paid,
And holy horrors solemnize the shade. 245

Here with his goats (not vow'd to sacred flame,
But pamper'd luxury) Melanthius came:
Two grooms attend him. With an envious look
He eyed the stranger, and imperious spoke:

The good old proverb how this pair fulfil! 250
One rogue is usher to another still.

Heaven with a secret principle endued
Mankind, to seek their own similitude.

Where goes the swine-herd with that ill-look'd guest?
That giant-glutton, dreadful at a feast! 255

Full many a post have those broad shoulders worn,
From every great man's gate repuls'd with scorn;

To no brave prize aspir'd the worthless swain,
'Twas but for scraps he ask'd, and ask'd in vain.

To beg, than work, he better understands; 260
Or we perhaps might take him off thy hands.

For any office could the slave be good,
To cleanse the fold, or help the kids to food,

If any labour those big joints could learn;
Some whey, to wash his bowels, he might earn.

To cringe, to whine, his idle hands to spread,
 Is all, by which that graceless maw is fed.
 Yet hear me ! if thy impudence but dare
 Approach yon walls, I prophecy thy fare :
 Dearly, full dearly, shalt thou buy thy bread 270
 With many a footstool thundering at thy head.

He thus : nor insolent of word alone,
 Spurn'd with his rustic heel his king unknown ;
 Spurn'd, but not mov'd : he like a pillar stood,
 Nor stirr'd an-inch, contemptuous, from the road :
 Doubtful, or with his staff to strike him dead,
 Or greet the pavement with his worthless head.
 Short was that doubt ; to quell his rage inur'd,
 The hero stood self-conquer'd, and endur'd.
 But, hateful of the wretch, Eumæus heav'd 280
 His hands obtesting, and this prayer conceiv'd :
 Daughters of Jove ! who from th' ætherial bowers
 Descend to swell the springs, and feed the flowers !
 Nymphs of this fountain ! to whose sacred names
 Our rural victims mount in blazing flames ! 285
 To whom Ulysses' piety preferr'd
 The yearly firstlings of his flock and herd ;
 Succeed my wish ; your votary restore :
 Oh, be some God his convoy to our shore !
 Due pains shall punish then this slave's offence,
 And humble all his airs of insolence,
 Who, proudly stalking, leaves the herds at large,
 Commences courtier, and neglects his charge.

What mutters he ? (Melanthius sharp rejoins)
 This crafty miscreant big with dark designs ? 295

The

The day shall come ; nay, 'tis already near,
When, slave ! to sell thee at a price too dear,
Must be my care ; and hence transport thee o'er,
(A load and scandal to this happy shore).

Oh ! that as surely great Apollo's dart,
Or some brave suitor's sword, might pierce the heart
Of the proud son ; as that we stand this hour
In lasting safety from the father's power !

So spoke the wretch, but, shunning farther fray,
Turn'd his proud step, and left them on their way.
Straight to the feastful palace he repair'd,
Familiar enter'd, and the banquet shar'd ;
Beneath Eurymachus, his patron lord,
He took his place, and plenty heap'd the board.

Meantime they heard, soft-circling in the sky,
Sweet airs ascend, and heavenly minstrelsy
(For Phemius to the lyre attun'd the strain) :
Ulysses hearken'd, then address'd the swain :

Well may this palace admiration claim,
Great, and respondent to the master's fame !
Stage above stage th' imperial structure stands,
Holds the chief honours, and the town commands :
High walls and battlements the courts inclose,
And the strong gates defy an host of foes.
Far other cares its dwellers now employ :
The throng'd assembly, and the feast of joy :
I see the smokes of sacrifice aspire,
And hear (what graces every feast) the lyre.

Then thus Eumæus : Judge we which were best ;
Amidst yon revellers a sudden guest

Chuse you to mingle, while behind I stay?
 Or I first entering introduce the way?
 Wait for a space without, but wait not long;
 This is the house of violence and wrong:
 Some rude insult thy reverend age may bear; 330
 For like their lawless lords the servants are.

Just is, O friend! thy caution, and address'd
 (Replied the chief) to no unheedful breast;
 The wrongs and injuries of base mankind
 Fresh to my sense, and always in my mind. 335
 The bravely-patient to no fortune yields:
 On rolling oceans, and in fighting fields,
 Storms have I pass'd, and many a stern debate;
 And now in humbler scene submit to Fate.
 What cannot Want? The blest she will expose, 340
 And I am learn'd in all her train of woes;
 She fills with navies, hosts, and loud alarms,
 The sea, the land, and shakes the world with arms!

Thus, near the gates conferring as they drew,
 Argus, the dog, his ancient master knew; 345
 He, not unconscious of the voice and tread,
 Lifts to the sound his ear, and rears his head;
 Bred by Ulysses, nourish'd at his board,
 But, ah! not fated long to please his lord!
 To him, his swiftness and his strength were vain; 350
 The voice of glory call'd him o'er the main.
 Till then in every sylvan chace renown'd,
 With Argus, Argus, rung the woods around;
 With him the youth pursued the goat or fawn,
 Or trac'd the mazy leveret o'er the lawn. 355

Now

Now left to man's ingratitude he lay,
Unhous'd, neglected in the public way;
And where on heaps the rich manure was spread,
Obscene with reptiles, took his sordid bed.

He knew his lord; he knew, and strove to meet;
In vain he strove to crawl, and kiss his feet;
Yet (all he could) his tail, his ears, his eyes,
Salute his master, and confess his joys.

Soft pity touch'd the mighty master's soul;
Adown his cheek a tear unbidden stole, 365
Stole unperceiv'd; he turn'd his head, and dry'd
The drop humane: then thus impassion'd cry'd:

What noble beast in this abandon'd state
Lies here all helpless at Ulysses' gate?

His bulk and beauty speak no vulgar praise; 370
If as he seems he was in better days,
Some care his age deserves: or was he priz'd
For worthless beauty! therefore now despis'd?

Such dogs and men there are, meer things of state,
And always cherish'd by their friends, the Great. 375

Not Argus so (Eumæus thus rejoin'd)
But serv'd a master of a nobler kind,
Who never, never shall behold him more!
Long, long since perish'd on a distant shore!

Oh! had you seen him, vigorous, bold, and young,
Swift as a stag, and as a lion strong;
Him no fell savage on the plain withstood,
None 'scap'd him, bosom'd in the gloomy wood;

His eye how piercing, and his scent how true,
To wind the vapour in the tainted dew! 385

Such, when Ulysses left his natal coast ;
 Now years un-nerve him, and his lord is lost
 The women keep the generous creature bare,
 A sleek and idle race is all their care :
 The master gone, the servants what restrains ? 390
 Or dwells humanity where riot reigns ?
 Jove fix'd it certain, that whatever day
 Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.

This said, the honest herdsman strode before ;
 The musing monarch pauses at the door : 395
 The dog, whom Fate had granted to behold
 His lord, when twenty tedious years had roll'd,
 Takes a last look, and, having seen him, dies ;
 So clos'd for ever faithful Argus' eyes !

And now Telemachus, the first of all, 400
 Observ'd Eumæus entering in the hall ;
 Distant he saw, across the shady dome ;
 Then gave a sign, and beckon'd him to come :
 There stood an empty seat, where late was plac'd,
 In order due, the steward of the feast 405
 (Who now was busied carving round the board) ;
 Eumæus took, and plac'd it near his lord.
 Before him instant was the banquet spread,
 And the bright basket pil'd with loaves of bread.

Next came Ulysses lowly at the door, 410
 A figure despicable, old, and poor,
 In squalid vests, with many a gaping rent,
 Propp'd on a staff, and trembling as he went.
 Then, resting on the threshold of the gate,
 Against a cypress pillar lean'd his weight 415
 (Smooth'd

(Smooth'd by the workman to a polish'd plain);
The thoughtful son beheld, and call'd his swain:

These viands, and this bread, Eumæus! bear,
And let yon mendicant our plenty share:
Then let him circle round the suitors' board, 420
And try the bounty of each gracious lord.
Bold let him act, (encourag'd thus by me;
How ill, alas! do want and shame agree!

His lord's command the faithful servant bears;
The seeming beggar answers with his prayers. 425
Blest be Telemachus! in every deed
Inspire him, Jove! in every wish succeed!
This said, the portion from his son convey'd
With smiles receiving on his scrip he lay'd.
Long as the minstrel swept the sounding wire, 430
He fed, and ceas'd when silence held the lyre.
Soon as the suitors from the banquet rose,
Minerva prompts the man of mighty woes
To tempt their bounties with a suppliant's art,
And learn the generous from th' ignoble heart. 435
(Not but his soul, resentful as humane,
Dooms to full vengeance all the offending train);
With speaking eyes, and voice of plaintive sound,
Humble he moves, imploring all around.
The proud feel pity, and relief bestow, 440
With such an image touch'd of human woe;
Enquiring all, their wonder they confess,
And eye the man, majestic in distress.

While thus they gaze and question with their eyes,
The bold Melanthius to their thought replies: 445
My

My lords! this stranger of gigantic port
 The good Eumæus usher'd to your court,
 Full well I mark'd the features of his face,
 Though all unknown his clime, or noble race.

And is this present, swineherd! of thy hand? 450
 Bring'st thou these vagrants to infest the land?
 (Returns Antinous with retorted eye)
 Objects uncouth! to check the genial joy.
 Enough of these our court already grace,
 Of giant stomach, and of famish'd face. 455
 Such guests Eumæus to his country brings,
 To share our feast, and lead the life of kings.

To whom the hospitable swain rejoin'd:
 Thy passion, prince, belies thy knowing mind.
 Who calls, from distant nations to his own, 460
 The poor, distinguish'd by their wants alone?
 Round the wide world are sought those men divine
 Who public structures raise, or who design;
 Those to whose eyes the Gods their ways reveal,
 Or bless with salutary arts to heal; 465
 But chief to poets such respect belongs,
 By rival nations courted for their songs;
 These states invite, and mighty kings admire,
 Wide as the sun displays his vital fire.

It is not so with want! how few that feed 470
 A wretch unhappy, merely for his need!
 Unjust to me and all that serve the state,
 To love Ulysses is to raise thy hate.
 For me, suffice the approbation won
 Of my great mistress, and her god-like son. 475

To

To him Telemachus: No more incense
 The man by nature prone to insolence:
 Injurious minds just answers but provoke—
 Then turning to Antinous, thus he spoke:
 Thanks to thy care! whose absolute command 430
 Thus drives the stranger from our court and land.
 Heaven bless its owner with a better mind!
 From envy free, to charity inclin'd.
 This both Penelope and I afford:
 Then, prince! be bounteous of Ulysses' board. 435
 To give another's is thy hand so slow?
 So much more sweet, to spoil, than to bestow?

Whence, great Telemachus! this lofty strain?
 (Antinous cries with insolent disdain)
 Portions like mine if every suitor gave, 440
 Our walls this twelvemonth should not see the slave.

He spoke, and lifting high above the board
 His ponderous footstool, shook it at his lord.
 The rest with equal hand conferr'd the bread;
 He fill'd his scrip, and to the threshold sped;
 But first before Antinous stopp'd, and said: }
 Bestow, my friend! thou dost not seem the worst
 Of all the Greeks, but prince-like and the first;
 Then, as in dignity, be first in worth,
 And I shall praise thee through the boundless earth.
 Once I enjoy'd in luxury of state
 Whate'er gives man the envied name of great;
 Wealth, servants, friends, were mine in better days;
 And hospitality was then my praise;

In

From all thou beg'st, a bold audacious slave ;
Nor all can give so much as thou canst crave.
Nor wonder I, at such profusion shown ; 535
Shameless they give, who give what's not their own.

The chief, retiring : Souls like that in thee
Ill suit such forms of grace and dignity.
Nor will that hand to utmost need afford
The smallest portion of a wasteful board, 540

Whose luxury whole patrimonies sweeps ;
Yet starving Want, amidst the riot, weeps.
The haughty suitor with resentment burns,
And, sourly smiling, this reply returns :

Take that, ere yet thou quit this princely throng :
And dumb for ever be thy slanderous tongue ! }
He said, and high the whirling tripod flung.

His shoulder-blade receiv'd th' ungente shock ;
He stood, and mov'd not, like a marble rock ;
But shook his thoughtful head, nor more complain'd,
Sedate of soul, his character sustain'd,

And inly form'd revenge : then back withdrew ;
Before his feet the well-fill'd scrip he threw, }
And thus with semblance mild address'd the crew:

May what I speak your princely minds approve,
Ye peers and rivals in this noble love !

Not for the hurt I grieve, but for the cause.

If, when the sword our country's quarrel draws,

Or if, defending what is justly dear,

From Mars impartial some broad wound we bear ; }
The generous motive dignifies the scar.

But

But for mere want, how hard to suffer wrong !
 Want brings enough of other ills along !
 Yet, if injustice never be secure,
 If fiends revenge, and Gods assert the poor, 565
 Death shall lay low the proud aggressor's head,
 And make the dust Antinous' bridal bed.

Peace, wretch ! and eat thy bread without offence,
 (The suitor cry'd) or force shall drag thee hence,
 Scourge through the public street, and cast thee there,
 A mangled carcase for the hounds to tear.

His furious deed the general anger mov'd,
 All, ev'n the worst, condemn'd : and some reprov'd.
 Was ever chief for wars like these renown'd ?
 Ill fits the stranger and the poor to wound. 575
 Unblest thy hand ! if in this low disguise
 Wander, perhaps, some inmate of the skies ;
 They (curious oft' of mortal actions) deign
 In forms like these, to round the earth and main,
 Just and unjust recording in their mind. 580
 And with sure eyes inspecting all mankind.

Telemachus, absorpt in thought severe,
 Nourish'd deep anguish, though he shed no tear ;
 But the dark brow of silent sorrow shook :
 While thus his mother to her virgins spoke : 585
 " On him and his may the bright God of day
 " That base, inhospitable blow repay !"
 The nurse replies : " If Jove receives my prayer,
 " Not one survives to breathe to-morrow's air."

All, all are foes, and mischief is their end ; 590
 Antinous most to gloomy death a friend ;

(Replies

(Replies the queen) the stranger begg'd their grace,
And melting pity soften'd every face;
From every other hand redress he found,
But fell Antinous answer'd with a wound. 595
Amidst her maids thus spoke the prudent queen,
Then bade Eumæus call the pilgrim in.
Much of th'experienc'd man I long to hear,
If or his certain eye, or listening ear,
Have learn'd the fortunes of my wandering lord? 600
Thus she, and good Eumæus took the word.

A private audience if thy grace impart,
The stranger's words may ease the royal heart.
His sacred eloquence in balm diffils,
And the sooth'd heart with secret pleasure fills. 605
Three days have spent their beams, three nights have run
Their silent journey, since his tale begun,
Unfinish'd yet! and yet I thirst to hear!
As when some Heaven-taught poet charms the ear,
(Suspending sorrow with celestial strain 610
Breath'd from the Gods to soften human pain)
Time steals away with unregarded wing,
And the soul hears him, though he cease to sing.

Ulysses late he saw, on Cretan ground,
(His father's guest) for Minos' birth renown'd. 615
He now but waits the wind, to waft him o'er,
With boundless treasure, from Thesprotia's shore.

To this the queen: The wanderer let me hear,
While yon luxurious race indulge their cheer,
Devour the grazing ox and browsing goat, 620
And turn my generous vintage down their throat.

For

For where's an arm, like thine, Ulysses! strong,
To curb wild riot, and to punish wrong?

She spoke. Telemachus then sneez'd aloud;
Constrain'd, his nostril echo'd through the crowd.
The smiling queen the happy omen blest'd:
"So may these impious fall, by fate oppress'd!"
Then to Eumæus: Bring the stranger, fly!
And if my questions meet a true reply,
Grac'd with a decent robe he shall retire,
A gift in season which his wants require.

Thus spoke Penelope. Eumæus flies
In duteous haste, and to Ulysses cries:
The queen invites thee, venerable guest!
A secret instinct moves her troubled breast;
Of her long absent lord from thee to gain
Some light, and soothe her soul's eternal pain.
If true, if faithful thou; her grateful mind
Of decent robes a present has design'd:
So finding favour in the royal eye,
Thy other wants her subjects shall supply.

Fair truth alone (the patient man reply'd)
My words shall dictate, and my lips shall guide.
To him, to me, one common lot was given,
In equal woes, alas! involv'd by Heaven.
Much of his fates I know; but check'd by fear
I stand: the hand of violence is here:
Here boundless wrongs the starry skies invade,
And injur'd suppliants seek in vain for aid.
Let for a space the pensive queen attend,
Nhr claim my story till the sun descend;

Then

Then in such robes as suppliants may require,
Compos'd and chearful by the genial fire,
When loud uproar and lawless riot cease,
Shall her pleas'd ear receive my words in peace. 655

Swift to the queen returns the gentle swain :
And say, (the cries) does fear, or shame, detain
The cautious stranger ? With the begging kind
Shame suits but ill. Eumæus thus rejoin'd :

He only asks a more propitious hour, 660
And shuns (who would not ?) wicked men in power ;
At evening mild (meet season to confer)
By turns to question, and by turns to hear,

Whoe'er this guest (the prudent queen replies)
His every step and every thought is wise : 665
For men like these on earth he shall not find
In all the miscreant race of human kind.

Thus she : Eumæus all her words attends,
And, parting, to the suitor powers descends ;
There seeks Telemachus, and thus apart 670
In whispers breathes the fondness of his heart :

The time, my lord, invites me to repair
Hence to the lodge ; my charge demands my care.
These sons of murder thirst thy life to take ;
Oh guard it, guard it for thy servant's sake ! 675

Thanks to my friend, he cries ; but now the hour
Of night draws on, go seek the rural bower :
But first refresh : and at the dawn of day
Hither a victim to the Gods convey.

Our life to Heaven's immortal Powers we trust, 680
Safe in their care, for Heaven protects the just.

Observant of his voice, Eumæus fate
 And fed recumbent on a chair of state.
 Then instant rose, and as he mov'd along
 'Twas riot all amid the suitor throng,
 They feast, they dance, and raise the mirthful song.
 Till now, declining toward the close of day,
 The sun obliquely shot his dewy ray.

THE
EIGHTEENTH BOOK

OF THE
ODYSSEY



ARGUMENT.

THE FIGHT OF ULYSSES AND IRUS.

THE beggar Irus insults Ulysses; the suitors promote the quarrel, in which Irus is worsted, and miserably handled. Penelope descends, and receives the presents of the suitors. The dialogue of Ulysses with Eurymachus.



THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XVIII.

WHILE fix'd in thought the pensive hero sat,
 A mendicant approach'd the royal gate;
 A surly vagrant of the giant kind,
 The stain of manhood, of a coward mind:
 From feast to feast, insatiate to devour
 He flew, attendant on the genial hour.
 Him, on his mother's knees when babe he lay,
 She nam'd Arnæus on his natal day:
 But Irus his associates call'd the boy,
 Practis'd the common messenger to fly;
 Irus, a name expressive of th' employ.

From his own roof, with meditated blows,
 He strove to drive the man of mighty woes.

Hence, dotard, hence! and timely speed thy way,
 Lest dragg'd in vengeance thou repent thy stay;
 See how with nods assent yon princely train!
 But, honouring age, in mercy I refrain;
 In peace away! lest, if persuasions fail,
 This arm with blows more eloquent prevail.

To whom, with stern regard: Oh insolence,
 Indecently to rail without offence!

What bounty gives, without a rival share;
 I ask, what harms not thee, to breathe this air:
 Alike on alms we both precarious live:
 And canst thou envy when the great relieve? 25
 Know, from the bounteous Heavens all riches flow,
 And what man gives, the Gods by man bestow;
 Proud as thou art, henceforth no more be proud,
 Left I imprint my vengeance in thy blood;
 Old as I am, should once my fury burn, 30
 How would'st thou fly, nor ev'n in thought return?

Mere woman-glutton! (thus the churl reply'd)
 A tongue so flippant, with a throat so wide!
 Why cease I, Gods! to dash those teeth away,
 Like some vile bear's, that, greedy of his prey, 35
 Uproots the bearded corn? Rise, try the fight,
 Gird well thy loins, approach and feel my might;
 Sure of defeat, before the peers engage;
 Unequal fight! when youth contends with age!

Thus in a wordy war their tongues display 40
 More fierce intents, preluding to the fray;
 Antinous hears, and, in a jovial vein,
 Thus with loud laughter to the suitor-train:

This happy day in mirth; my friends, employ,
 And, lo! the Gods conspire to crown our joy. 45
 See ready for the fight, and hand to hand,
 Yon surly mendicants contentious stand;
 Why urge we not to blows? Well pleas'd they spring
 Swift from their seats, and thickening form a ring.
 To whom Antinous: Lo! enrich'd with blood,
 A kid's well-fatted entrails (tasteful food)

On

On glowing embers lie ; on him bestow
The choicest portion who subdues his foe ;
Grant him unrival'd in these walls to stay,
The sole attendant on the genial day. 55

The lords applaud : Ulysses then with art,
And fears well-feign'd, disguis'd his dauntless heart :

Worn as I am with age, decay'd with woe,
Say, is it baseness to decline the foe ?
Hard conflict ! when calamity and age 60

With vigorous youth, unknown to cares, engage !
Yet, fearful of disgrace, to try the day
Imperious hunger bids, and I obey ;
But swear, impartial arbiters of right,
Swear to stand neutral, while we cope in fight. 65

The peers assent : when straight his sacred head
Telemachus uprais'd, and sternly said :

Stranger, if prompted to chastise the wrong
Of this bold insolent ; confide, be strong !
Th' injurious Greek, that dares attempt a blow, 70
That instant makes Telemachus his foe ;
And these my friends * shall guard the sacred ties
Of hospitality, for they are wise.

Then, girding his strong loins, the king prepares
To close in combat, and his body bares ; 75
Broad spread his shoulders, and his nervous thighs
By just degrees, like well-turn'd columns, rise :
Ample his chest, his arms are round and long,
And each strong joint Minerva knits more strong
(Attendant on her chief) : the suitor-crowd 80
With wonder gaze, and gazing speak aloud ;

I 4

Irus !

* Antinous and Eurymachus.

Irus ! alas ! shall Irus be no more ?
 Black fate impends, and this th' avenging hour !
 Gods ! how his nerves a matchless strength proclaim,
 Swell o'er his well-strung limbs, and brace his frame !

Then, pale with fears, and sickening at the sight,
 They dragg'd th' unwilling Irus to the fight ;
 From his blank visage fled the coward blood,
 And his flesh trembled as aghast he stood.

Oh, that such baseness should disgrace the light !
 O hide it, Death, in everlasting night !

(Exclaims Antinous) can a vigorous foe
 Meanly decline to combat age and woe ?

But hear me, wretch ! if recreant in the fray,
 That huge bulk yield this ill-contested day :

Instant thou sail'st, to Echetus resign'd ;
 A tyrant, fiercest of the tyrant-kind,
 Who casts thy mangled ears and nose a prey
 To hungry dogs, and lops the man away.

While with indignant scorn he sternly spoke,
 In every joint the trembling Irus shook ;
 Now front to front each frowning champion stands,
 And poises high in air his adverse hands.

The chief yet doubts, or to the shades below
 To sell the giant at one vengeful blow,

Or save his life ; and soon his life to save
 The king resolves, for Mercy sways the brave.

That instant Irus his huge arm extends,
 Full on the shoulder the rude weight descends ;

The sage Ulysses, fearful to disclose
 The hero latent in the man of woes,

Check'd half his might; yet rising to the stroke;
 His jaw-bone dash'd, the crashing jaw-bone broke:
 Down dropp'd he stupid from the stunning wound;
 His feet, extended, quivering beat the ground; 115
 His mouth and nostrils spout a purple flood:
 His teeth, all shatter'd, rush inmix'd with blood.

The peers transported, as outstretch'd he lies,
 With bursts of laughter rend the vaulted skies;
 Then dragg'd along, all bleeding from the wound,
 His length of carcase trailing prints the ground;
 Rais'd on his feet, again he reels, he falls,
 Till propp'd, reclining on the palace walls:
 Then to his hand a staff the victor gave,
 And thus with just reproach address'd the slave: 125

There, terrible, affright the dogs, and reign
 A dreaded tyrant o'er the bestial train!
 But mercy to the poor and stranger show,
 Lest Heaven in vengeance send some mightier woe.

Scornful he spoke, and o'er his shoulder flung
 The broad-patch'd scrip; the scrip in tatters hung
 Ill-join'd, and knotted to a twisted thong.
 Then, turning short, disdain'd a further stay;
 But to the palace measur'd back the way.

There as he rested, gathering in a ring 135
 The peers with smiles address'd their unknown king:

Stranger, may Jove and all th' ærial Powers,
 With every blessing crown thy happy hours!
 Our freedom to thy prowess'd arm we owe
 From bold intrusion of thy coward foe: 140
 Instant the flying sail the slave shall wing
 To Echetus, the monster of a king.

While

While pleas'd he hears, Antinous bears the food,
 A kid's well-fatted entrails, rich with blood :
 The bread from canisters of shining mold 145
 Amphinous ; and wines that laugh in gold :
 And, oh ! (he mildly cries) may Heaven display
 A beam of glory o'er thy future day !
 Alas ! the brave too oft is doom'd to bear
 The gripes of poverty, and stings of care. 150

To whom with thought mature the king replies :
 The tongue speaks wisely, when the soul is wise ;
 Such was thy father ! in imperial state,
 Great without vice, that oft attends the great :
 Nor from the fire art thou, the son, declin'd ; 155
 Then hear my words, and grave them in thy mind !
 Of all that breathes, or groveling creeps on earth,
 Most vain is man ! calamitous by birth ;
 To-day, with power elate, in strength he blooms ;
 The haughty creature on that power presumes : 160
 Anon from Heaven a sad reverse he feels ;
 Untaught to bear, 'gainst Heaven the wretch rebels.
 For man is changeful, as his blifs or woe ;
 Too high when prosperous, when distress'd too low.
 There was a day, when with the scornful great 165
 I swell'd in pomp and arrogance of state ;
 Proud of the power that to high birth belongs ;
 And us'd that power to justify my wrongs.
 Then let not man be proud ; but, firm of mind,
 Bear the best humbly, and the worst resign'd ; 170
 Be dumb when Heaven afflicts ! unlike yon train
 Of haughty spoilers, insolently vain ;

Who

Who make their queen and all her wealth a prey ;
But vengeance and Ulysses wing their way.
Oh may'st thou, favour'd by some guardian Power, 175
Far, far be distant in that deathful hour !
For sure I am, if stern Ulysses breathe,
These lawless riots end in blood and death.

Then to the Gods the rosy juice he pours,
And the drain'd goblet to the chief restores. 180
Stung to the soul, o'ercast with holy dread,
He shook the graceful honours of his head ;
His boding mind the future woe foretells ;
In vain ! by great Telemachus he falls,
For Pallas seals his doom : all sad he turns 185
To join the peers ; resumes his throne, and mourns.

Meanwhile Minerva with instinctive fires
Thy soul, Penelope, from Heaven inspires :
With flattering hopes the suitors to betray,
And seem to meet, yet fly, the bridal day : 190
Thy husband's wonder, and thy son's, to raise ;
And crown the mother and the wife with praise.
Then, while the streaming sorrow dims her eyes,
Thus with a transient smile the matron cries :

Eurynomè ! to go where riot reigns 195
I feel an impulse, though my soul disdains ;
To my lov'd son the snares of death to show,
And in the traitor-friend unmask the foe ;
Who, smooth of tongue, in purpose insincere,
Hides fraud in smiles, while death is ambush'd there.

Go, warn thy son, nor be the warning vain,
(Reply'd the sagest of the royal train)

But

But bath'd, anointed, and adorn'd, descend;
 Powerful of charms, bid every grace attend;
 The tide of flowing tears a-while suppress;
 Tears but indulge the sorrow, not repress.
 Some joy remains: to thee a son is given,
 Such as, in fondness, parents ask of Heaven.

Ah me! forbear, returns the queen, forbear;
 Oh! talk not, talk not of vain beauty's care;
 No more I bathe, since he no longer sees
 Those charms, for whom alone I wish to please.
 The day that bore Ulysses from this coast,
 Blasted the little bloom these cheeks could boast.
 But instant bid Autonoe descend,
 Instant Hippodamè our steps attend;
 Ill suits it female virtue to be seen
 Alone, indecent, in the walks of men.

Then, while Eurynomè the mandate bears,
 From heaven Minerva shoots with guardian cares;
 O'er all her senses, as the couch she press'd,
 She pours a pleasing, deep, and death-like rest,
 With every beauty every feature arms,
 Bids her cheeks glow, and lights-up all her charms,
 In her love-darting eyes awakes the fires,
 (Immortal gifts to kindle soft desires)
 From limb to limb an air majestic sheds,
 And the pure ivory o'er her bosom spreads.
 Such Venus shines, when with a measur'd bound
 She smoothly gliding swims th' harmonious round
 When with the Graces in the dance she moves,
 And fires the gazing Gods with ardent loves.

Then

Then to the skies her flight Minerva bends,
And to the queen the damsel-train descends;
Wak'd at their steps, her flowing eyes unclose; 235
The tear she wipes, and thus renews her woes:

Howe'er 'tis well; that sleep a-while can free,
With soft forgetfulness, a wretch like me;
Oh! were it giv'n to yield this transient breath,
Send, O Diana, send the sleep of death: 240

Why must I waste a tedious life in tears,
Nor bury in the silent grave my cares?
O my Ulysses! ever-honour'd name!
For thee I mourn, till death dissolves my frame.

Thus wailing, slow and sadly she descends, 245
On either hand a damsel-train attends:

Full where the dome its shining valves expands,
Radiant before the gazing peers she stands;
A vail, translucent o'er her brow display'd,
Her beauty seems, and only seems, to shade: 250

Sudden she lightens in their dazzled eyes,
And sudden flames in every bosom rise;
They send their eager souls with every look,
Till silence thus th' imperial matron broke:

Oh why! my son, why now no more appears 255
That warmth of soul that urg'd thy younger years?

Thy riper days no growing worth impart,
A man in stature, still a boy in heart!
Thy well-knit frame unprofitably strong,

Speaks thee an hero from an hero sprung: 260

But the just Gods in vain those gifts bestow,
Oh wise alone in form, and brave in show!

Heavens!

Heavens ! could a stranger feel oppression's hand
Beneath thy roof, and could'st thou tamely stand ?
If thou the stranger's righteous cause decline, 265
His is the sufferance, but the shame is thine.

To whom, with filial awe, the prince returns :
That generous soul with just resentment burns ;
Yet, taught by time, my heart has learn'd to glow,
For others' good, and melt at others' woe : 270
But, impotent these riots to repel,
I bear their outrage, though my soul rebel :
Helpless amid the snares of death I tread,
And numbers leagued in impious union dread ;
But now no crime is their's : this wrong proceeds 275
From Irus, and the guilty Irus bleeds.
Oh would to Jove ! or her whose arms display
The shield of Jove, or him who rules the day !
That yon proud suitors, who licentious tread
These courts, within these courts like Irus bled : 280
Whose loose head tottering, as with wine oppress'd,
Obliquely drops, and nodding knocks his breast ;
Powerless to move, his staggering feet deny
The coward wretch the privilege to fly.

Then to the queen Eurymachus replies : 285
Oh justly lov'd, and not more fair than wise !
Should Greece through all her hundred states survey
Thy finish'd charms, all Greece would own thy sway ;
In rival crouds contest the glorious prize,
Dispeopling realms to gaze upon thy eyes : 290
O woman ! loveliest of the lovely kind,
In body perfect, and compleat in mind !

Ah me! returns the queen, when from this shore
 Ulysses sail'd, then beauty was no more!
 The Gods decreed these eyes no more should keep 295
 Their wonted grace, but only serve to weep.
 Should he return, whate'er my beauties prove,
 My virtues last; my brightest charm is love.
 Now, grief, thou all art mine! the Gods o'ercast
 My soul with woes, that long! ah long must last! 300
 Too faithfully my heart retains the day
 That sadly tore my royal lord away:
 He grasp'd my hand, and, O my spouse! I leave
 Thy arms, (he cried) perhaps to find a grave:
 Fame speaks the Trojans bold; they boast the skill
 To give the feather'd arrow wings to kill,
 To dart the spear, and guide the rushing car
 With dreadful inroad through the walks of war.
 My sentence is gone forth, and 'tis decreed
 Perhaps by righteous Heaven that I must bleed! 310
 My father, mother, all I trust to thee;
 To them, to them transfer the love of me:
 But, when my son grows man, the royal sway
 Resign, and happy be thy bridal day!
 Such were his words; and Hymen now prepares 315
 To light his torch and give me up to cares;
 Th'afflictive hand of wrathful Jove to bear:
 A wretch the most compleat that breathes the air!
 Fall'n ev'n below the rights to woman due!
 Careless to please, with insolence ye woo! 320
 The generous lovers, studious to succeed,
 Bid their whole herds and flocks in banquets bleed;

By

By precious gifts the vow sincere display:
You, only you, make her ye love your prey.

Well-pleas'd Ulysses hears his queen deceive 325
The suitor train, and raise a thirkt to give:
False hopes she kindles, but those hopes betray,
And promise, yet elude, the bridal day.

While yet she speaks, the gay Antinous cries:
Offspring of kings, and more than woman wife! 330
'Tis right; 'tis man's prerogative to give,
And custom bids thee without shame receive;
Yet never, never, from thy dome we move,
Till Hymen lights the torch of spousal love.

The peers dispatch their heralds, to convey 335
The gifts of love; with speed they take the way.
A robe Antinous gives of shining dyes,
The varying hues in gay confusion rise
Rich from the artists hand! Twelve clasps of gold
Close to the lessening loins the vest infold; 340
Down from the swelling waist the vest unbound
Floats in bright waves redundant o'er the ground.

A bracelet rich with gold, with amber gay,
That shot effulgence like the solar ray,
Eurymachus presents: and ear-rings bright, 345
With triple stars, that cast a trembling light.
Pisander bears a necklace wrought with art:
And every peer, expressive of his heart,
A gift bestows: this done, the queen ascends,
And slow behind her damsel train attends. 350

Then to the dance they form the vocal train,
Till Hesperus leads forth the starry train;

And

And now he raises, as the day-light fades,
His golden circlet in the deepening shades :
Three vases heap'd with copious fires display 355
O'er all the palace a fictitious day;
From space to space the torch wide-beaming burns,
And sprightly damsels trim the rays by turns.

To whom the king : Ill suits your sex to stay
Alone with men ! ye modest maids, away ! 360
Go, with the queen the spindle guide ; or cull
(The partners of her cares) the silver wool ;
Be it my task the torches to supply,
Ev'n till the morning lamp adorns the sky ;
Ev'n till the morning, with unwearied care, 365
Sleepless I watch ; for I have learn'd to bear.

Scornful they heard : Melantho, fair and young,
(Melantho from the loins of Dolius sprung,
Who with the queen her years an infant led,
With the soft fondness of a daughter bred) 370
Chiefly derides : regardless of the cares
Her queen endures, polluted joys she shares
Nocturnal with Eurymachus ! With eyes
That speak disdain the wanton thus replies :
Oh ! whither wanders thy distemper'd brain 375
Thou bold intruder on a princely train ?
Hence to the vagrant's rendezvous repair ;
Or shun in some black forge the midnight air.
Proceeds this boldness from a turn of soul,
Or flows licentious from the copious bowl ? 380
Is it that vanquish'd Irus swells thy mind ?
A foe may meet thee of a braver kind,

Who, shortening with a storm of blows thy stay,
Shall send thee howling all in blood away!

To whom with frowns : O impudent in wrong !
Thy lord shall curb that insolence of tongue ;
Know, to Telemachus I tell th' offence ;
The scourge, the scourge shall lash thee into sense.

With conscious shame they bear the stern rebuke,
Nor longer durst sustain the sovereign look. 390

Then to the servile task the monarch turns
His royal hands : each torch refulgent burns
With added day : meanwhile, in museful mood
Absorpt in thought, on vengeance fix'd he stood.

And now the Martial Maid, by deeper wrongs 395
To rouse Ulysses, points the suitors tongues,

Scornful of age to taunt the virtuous man ;
Thoughtless and gay, Eurymachus began :

Hear me (he cries) confederates and friends !
Some God, no doubt, this stranger kindly sends ; 400

The shining baldness of his head survey,
It aids our torch-light and reflects the ray.—

Then to the king that level'd haughty Troy,
Say, if large hire can tempt thee to employ

Those hands in work ; to tend the rural trade, 405
To dress the walk, and form th' embowering shade ?

So food and raiment constant will I give :
But idly thus thy soul prefers to live,

And starve by strolling, not by work to thrive. }

To whom incens'd : Should we, O prince, engage
In rival tasks beneath the burning rage

Of summer suns ; were both constrain'd to wield,
Foodless, the scythe along the burthen'd field ;

Or

Or should we labour, while the ploughshare wounds,
With steers of equal strength, th' allotted grounds :
Beneath my labours how thy wondering eyes
Might see the fable field at once arise !

Should Jove dire war unloose ; with spear and shield,
And nodding helm, I tread th' ensanguin'd field,
Fierce in the van : then would'st thou, would'st thou,

—say,—

Misname me, glutton, in that glorious day ?

No, thy ill-judging thoughts the brave disgrace ;

'Tis thou injurious art, not I am base.

Proud to seem brave among a coward train !

But know thou art not valorous, but vain.

Gods ! should the stern Ulysses rise in might,

These gates would seem too narrow for thy flight.

While yet he speaks, Eurymachus replies,

With indignation flashing from his eyes :

Slave, I with justice might deserve the wrong !

Should I not punish that opprobrious tongue,

Irreverent to the great, and uncontrol'd,

Art thou from wine, or innate folly, bold ?

Perhaps these outrages from Irus flow,

A worthless triumph o'er a worthless foe !

He said, and with full force a footstool threw ;

Whirl'd from his arm, with erring rage it flew ;

Ulysses, cautious of the vengeful foe,

Stoops to the ground, and disappoints the blow.

Not so a youth who deals the goblet round,

Full on his shoulder it inflicts a wound,

Dash'd from his hand the sounding goblet flies,

He shrieks, he reels, he falls, and breathless lies.

Then wild uproar and clamour mounts the sky,
 Till mutual thus the peers indignant cry : 445
 Oh ! had this stranger sunk to realms beneath,
 To the black realms of darkness and of death,
 Ere yet he trod these shores ! to strife he draws
 Peer against peer ; and what the weighty cause ?
 A vagabond ! for him the great destroy, 450
 In vile ignoble jars, the feast of joy.

To whom the stern Telemachus uprose :
 Gods ! what wild folly from the goblet flows ?
 Whence this unguarded openness of soul,
 But from the licence of the copious bowl ? 455
 Or Heaven delusion sends : but hence, away !
 Force I forbear, and without force obey.

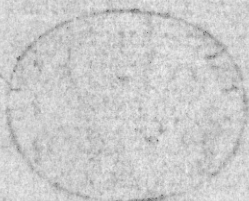
Silent, abash'd, they hear the stern rebuke,
 Till thus Amphinomus the silence broke :

True are his words, and he whom truth offends 460
 Not with Telemachus, but truth contends ;
 Let not the hand of violence invade
 The reverend stranger, or the spotless maid ;
 Retire we hence, but crown with rosy wine
 The flowing goblet to the Powers divine : 465
 Guard he his guest beneath whose roof he stands,
 This justice, this the social rite demands.

The peers assent ; the goblet Mulius crown'd
 With purple juice, and bore in order round ;
 Each peer successive his libation pours 470
 To the blest Gods who fill th' ærial bowers ;
 Then, swill'd with wine, with noise the crouds obey,
 And rushing forth tumultuous reel away.

THE

THE
NINETEENTH BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.



ARGUMENT.

THE DISCOVERY OF ULYSSES TO EURYCLEA.

ULYSSES and his son remove the weapons out of the armoury. Ulysses, in conversation with Penelope, gives a fictitious account of his adventures; then assures her he had formerly entertained her husband in Crete; and describes exactly his person and dress, affirms to have heard of him in Phæacia and Thesprotia, and that his return is certain, and within a month. He then goes to bathe, and is attended by Euryclea, who discovers him to be Ulysses by the scar upon his leg, which he formerly received in hunting the wild boar on Parnassus. The poet inserts a digression, relating that accident, with all its particulars.



THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XIX.

CONSULTING secret with the blue-ey'd Maid,
 Still in the dome divine Ulysses stay'd :
 Revenge mature for act inflam'd his breast ;
 And thus the son the fervent fire address'd :

Instant convey those steely stores of war 5
 To distant rooms, dispos'd with secret care :
 The cause demanded by the suitor-train,
 To soothe their fears, a specious reason feign :
 Say, since Ulysses left his natal coast,
 Obscene with smoke, their beamy lustre lost, 10
 His arms deform'd, the roof they won't adorn :
 From the glad walls inglorious lumber torn.
 Suggest, that Jove the peaceful thought inspir'd,
 Left, they by sight of swords to fury fir'd,
 Dishonest wounds, or violence of soul, 15
 Defame the bridal feast and friendly bowl.

The prince obedient to the sage command,
 To Euryclea thus: The female band
 In their apartments keep ; secure the doors :
 These swarthy arms among the covert stores 20
 Are seemlier hid ; my thoughtless youth they blame,
 Imbrown'd with vapour of the smouldering flame.

In happy hour (pleas'd Euryclea cries)
 Tutor'd by early woes, grow early wise!
 Inspect with sharpen'd sight, and frugal care, 25
 Your patrimonial wealth, a prudent heir.
 But who the lighted taper will provide,
 (The female train retir'd) your toils to guide?

Without infringing hospitable right,
 This guest (he cried) shall bear the guiding light: 30
 I cheer no lazy vagrants with repast;
 They share the meal that earn it ere they taste.

He said; from female ken she straight secures
 The purpos'd deed, and guards the bolted doors:
 Auxiliar to his son, Ulysses bears

The plummy-crested helms, and pointed spears,
 With shields indented deep in glorious wars. }

Minerva viewless on her charge attends,
 And with her golden lamp his toil befriends;
 Not such the sickly beams, which, unsincere, 40
 Gild the cross vapour of this nether sphere!

A present deity the prince confess'd,
 And rapt with extacy the fire address'd:

What miracle thus dazzles with surprize!
 Distinct in rows the radiant columns rise: 45

The walls, where'er my wondering sight I turn,
 And roofs, amidst a blaze of glory burn!

Some visitant of pure ethereal race,
 With his bright presence deigns the dome to grace.

Be calm, replies the fire, to none impart, 50
 But oft revolve the vision in thy heart:

Celestials, mantled in excess of light,
 Can visit unapproach'd by mortal sight.

See

Seek thou repose ; whilst here I sole remain,
T' explore the conduct of the female train : 55
The pensive queen, perchance, desires to know
The series of my toils, to sooth her woe.

With tapers flaming day his train attends,
His bright alcove th' obsequious youth ascends :
Soft slumberous shades his drooping eye-lids close, 60
Till on her eastern throne Aurora glows.

Whilst, forming plans of death, Ulysses stay'd
In council secret with the Martial Maid ;
Attendant nymphs in beauteous order wait
The queen, descending from her bower of state. 65
Her cheeks the warmer blush of Venus wear,
Chasten'd with coy Diana's pensive air.

An ivory seat with silver ringlets grac'd,
By fam'd Icmalius wrought, the menials plac'd :
With ivory silver'd-thick the foot-stool shone, 70
O'er which the panther's various hide was thrown.
The sovereign seat with graceful air she press'd ;
To different tasks their toil the nymphs address'd :
The golden goblets some, and some restor'd
From stains of luxury the polish'd board : 75
These to remove th' expiring embers came,
While those with unctuous fir foment the flame.

'Twas then Melantho with imperious mien
Renew'd th' attack, incontinent of spleen :
Avaunt, she cry'd, offensive to my sight ! 80
Deem not in ambush here to lurk by night,
Into the woman-state asquint to pry ;
A day-devourer, and an evening spy !

Vagrant, be gone! before this blazing brand
Shall urge—and wav'd it hissing in her hand. 85

Th' insulted hero rolls his wrathful eyes,
And, Why so turbulent of soul? he cries;
Can these lean shrivel'd limbs unnerv'd with age,
These poor but honest rags, enkindle rage?

In crouds we wear the badge of hungry Fate; 90
And beg, degraded from superior state!

Constrain'd a rent-charge on the rich I live;
Reduc'd to crave the good I once could give:

A palace, wealth, and slaves, I late possess'd,
And all that makes the great be call'd the bless'd: 95

My gate, an emblem of my open soul,
Embrac'd the poor, and dealt a bounteous dole.

Scorn not the sad reverse, injurious maid!

'Tis Jovè's high will, and be his will obey'd!

Nor think thyself exempt: that rosy prime 100

Must share the general doom of withering time:

To some new channel soon, the changeful tide

Of royal grace th' offended queen may guide;

And her lov'd lord unplume thy towering pride. }

Or were he dead, 'tis wisdom to beware: 105

Sweet blooms the prince beneath Apollo's care;

Your deeds with quick impartial eye surveys,

Potent to punish what he cannot praise.

Her keen reproach had reach'd the sovereign's ear;

Loquacious insolent! she cries, forbear: 110

To thee the purpose of my soul I told;

Venial discourse, unblam'd, with him to hold:

The storied labours of my wandering lord,

To soothe my grief he haply may record:

Yet

Yet him, my guest, thy venom'd rage hath stung :
 Thy head shall pay the forfeit of thy tongue !
 But thou on whom my palace cares depend,
 Eurynomè, regard the stranger-friend :
 A seat, soft spread with furry spoils, prepare ;
 Due-distant, for us both to speak, and hear. 120

The menial fair obeys with duteous haste :
 A seat adorn'd with furry spoils she plac'd :
 Due-distant for discourse the hero sate ;
 When thus the sovereign from her chair of state :
 Reveal, obsequious to my first demand, 125
 Thy name, thy lineage, and thy native land.

He thus : O queen ! whose far resounding fame
 Is bounded only by the starry frame ;
 Consummate pattern of imperial sway,
 Whose pious rule a warlike race obey ! 130
 In wavy gold thy summer vales are dress'd ;
 Thy autumns bend with copious fruit oppress'd ;
 With flocks and herds each grassy plain is stor'd ;
 And fish of every fin thy seas afford ;
 Their affluent joys the grateful realms confess, 135
 And bless the Power that still delights to bless.
 Gracious permit this prayer, imperial dame !
 Forbear to know my lineage, or my name :
 Urge not this breast to heave, these eyes to weep ;
 In sweet oblivion let my sorrow sleep ! 140
 My woes awak'd will violate your ear ;
 And to this gay censorious train appear
 A winy vapour melting in a tear. }

Their gifts the Gods resum'd (the queen rejoin'd)
 Exterior grace, and energy of mind : 145
 When

When the dear partner of my nuptial joy,
 Auxiliar troops combin'd, to conquer Troy.
 My lord's protecting hand alone would raise
 My drooping verdure, and extend my praise!
 Peers from the distant Samian shore resort; 150
 Here with Dulichians join'd, besiege the court:
 Zacynthus, green with ever-shady groves,
 And Ithaca, presumptuous boast their loves:
 Obtruding on my choice a second lord,
 They press the Hymenæan rite abhorr'd. 155
 Mis-rule thus mingling with domestic cares,
 I live regardless of my state-affairs:
 Receive no stranger-guest, no poor relieve;
 But ever for my lord in secret grieve!—
 This art, instinct by some celestial Power, 160
 I try'd, elusive of the bridal hour:
 "Ye peers, I cry, who press to gain a heart,
 "Where dead Ulysses claims no future part;
 "Rebate your loves, each rival suit suspend,
 "Till this funereal web my labours end: 165
 "Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
 "A pall of state, the ornament of death.
 "For when to Fate he bows, each Grecian dame
 "With just reproach were licens'd to defame;
 "Should he, long honour'd in supreme command,
 "Want the last duties of a daughter's hand."
 The fiction pleas'd! their loves I long elude;
 The night still ravel'd what the day renew'd,
 Three years successful in my art conceal'd,
 My ineffectual fraud the fourth reveal'd: 175

Befriended

Befriended by my own domestic spies,
 The woof unwrought the suitor-train surprize.
 From nuptial rites they now no more recede,
 And fear forbids to falsify the breed.
 My anxious parents urge a speedy choice, 139
 And to their suffrage gain the filial voice;
 For rule mature, Telemachus deploras
 His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores—
 But, stranger! as thy days seem full of fate,
 Divide discourse, in turn thy birth relate: 135
 Thy port asserts thee of distinguish'd race:
 No poor unfather'd product of disgrace.

Princess! he cries, renew'd by your command,
 The dear remembrance of my native land
 Of secret grief unseals the fruitful source; 139
 And tears repeat their long-forgotten course!
 So pays the wretch whom Fate constrains to roam,
 The dues of nature to his natal home!—
 But inward on my soul let sorrow prey,
 Your sovereign will my duty bids obey. 143

Crete awes the circling waves, a fruitful soil!
 And ninety cities crown the sea-born isle:
 Mix'd with her genuine sons, adopted names
 In various tongues avow their various claims;
 Cydonians dreadful with the bended yew, 149
 And bold Pelasgi boast a native's due:
 The Dorians, plum'd amid the files of war,
 Her foodful glebe with fierce Achajians share;
 Cnossus, her capital of high command,
 Where scepter'd Minos with impartial hand 155

Divided

Divided right ; each ninth revolving year
 By Jove receiv'd in council to confer.
 His son Deucalion bore successive sway ;
 His son, who gave me first to view the day !
 The royal bed an elder issue blest, 210
 Idomeneus, whom Ilian fields attest
 Of matchless deeds : untrain'd to martial toil
 I liv'd inglorious in my native isle,
 Studious of peace ; and Æthion is my name.
 'Twas then to Crete the great Ulysses came ; 215
 For elemental war, and wintry Jove,
 From Malea's gusty cape his navy drove
 To bright Lucina's fane ; the shelvy coast
 Where loud Amnisus in the deep is lost.
 His vessels moor'd, (an incommodious port !) 220
 The hero speeded to the Cnossian court :
 Ardent the partner of his arms to find,
 In leagues of long commutual friendship join'd.
 Vain hope ! ten furs had warm'd the western strand,
 Since my brave brother with his Cretan band 225
 Had sail'd for Troy : but to the genial feast
 My honour'd roof receiv'd the royal guest :
 Beeves for his train the Cnossian peers assign
 A public treat, with jars of generous wine.
 Twelve days, while Boreas vex'd th' aerial space, 230
 My hospitable dome he deign'd to grace :
 And, when the north had ceas'd the stormy roar,
 He wing'd his voyage to the Phrygian shore.

Thus the fam'd hero, perfected in wiles,
 With fair similitude of truth beguiles 235

The queen's attentive ear: dissolv'd in woe,
From her bright eyes the tears unbounded flow.

As snows collected on the mountain freeze,

When milder regions breathe a vernal breeze,

The fleecy pile obeys the whispering gales, 240

Ends in a stream, and murmurs through the vales:

So, melted with the pleasing tale he told,

Down her fair cheek the copious torrent roll'd:

She to her present lord laments him lost,

And views that object which she wants the most! 245

Withering at heart to see the weeping fair,

His eyes look stern, and cast a gloomy stare;

Of horn the stiff relentless balls appear,

Or globes of iron fix'd in either sphere;

Firm wisdom interdicts the softening tear.

A speechless interval of grief ensues,

Till thus the queen the tender theme renews:

Stranger! that e'er thy hospitable roof

Ulysses grac'd, confirm by faithful proof:

Delineate to my view my warlike lord, 255

His form, his habit, and his train record.

'Tis hard, he cries, to bring to sudden sight

Ideas that have wing'd their distant flight;

Rare on the mind those images are trac'd,

Whose footsteps twenty winters have defac'd: 260

But what I can, receive.—In ample mode,

A robe of military purple flow'd

O'er all his frame: illustrious on his breast

The double-clasping gold the king confest.

In the rich woof a hound, Mosaic-drawn, 265

Bore on full-stretch, and seiz'd a dappled fawn;

Deep

Deep in the neck his fangs indent their hold;
 They part, and struggle in the moving gold.
 Fine as a filmy web beneath it shone
 A vest, that dazzled like a cloudless sun: 276
 The female train who round him throng'd to gaze,
 In silent wonder sigh'd unwilling praise.
 A sabre, when the warrior press'd to part,
 I gave, enamel'd with Vulcanian art:
 A mantle purple-ting'd, and radiant vest,
 Dimension'd equal to his size, express'd
 Affection grateful to my honour'd guest. }
 A favourite herald in his train I knew,
 His visage solemn sad, of sable hue: }
 Short woolly curls o'erflœc'd his bending head, 280
 O'er which a promontory shoulder spread;
 Eurybates! in whose large soul alone
 Ulysses view'd an image of his own.
 His speech the tempest of her grief restor'd,
 In all he told she recogniz'd her lord, 285
 But when the storm was spent in plenteous showers;
 A pause inspiriting her languish'd powers:
 Oh! thou, she cry'd, whom first inclement fate
 Made welcome to my hospitable gate;
 With all thy wants the name of poor shall end: 290
 Henceforth live honour'd, my domestic friend!
 The vest much envy'd on your native coast,
 And regal robe with figur'd gold emboss'd,
 In happier hours my artful hand employ'd,
 When my lov'd lord this blissful bower enjoy'd: 295
 The fall of Troy erroneous and forlorn
 Doom'd to survive, and never to return!

Then

Then he, with pity touch'd : O royal dame !
 Your ever-anxious mind, and beauteous frame,
 From the devouring rage of grief reclaim. }
 I not the fondness of your soul reprove
 For such a lord ! who crown'd your virgin-love
 With the dear blessing of a fair increase ;
 Himself adorn'd with more than mortal grace :
 Yet while I speak, the mighty woe suspend ; 305
 Truth forms my tale ; to pleasing truth attend.
 The royal object of your dearest care
 Breathes in no distant clime the vital air :
 In rich Thesprotia, and the nearer bound
 Of Thessaly, his name I heard renown'd : 310
 Without retinue, to that friendly shore
 Welcom'd with gifts of price, a sumless store !
 His sacrilegious train, who dar'd to prey
 On herds devoted to the God of Day,
 Were doom'd by Jove, and Phœbus' just decree, 315
 To perish in the rough Trinacrian sea.
 To better Fate the blameless chief ordain'd,
 A floating fragment of the wreck regain'd,
 And rode the storm ; till, by the billows tost,
 He landed on the fair Phæacian coast. 320
 That race, who emulate the life of Gods,
 Receive him joyous to their blest abodes :
 Large gifts confer, a ready sail command,
 To speed his voyage to the Grecian strand.
 But your wise lords (in whose capacious soul 325
 High schemes of power in just succession roll)
 His Ithaca refus'd from favouring Fate,
 Till copious wealth might guard his regal state.

Phedon the fact affirm'd, whose sovereign sway
 Thesprotian tribes, a duteous race, obey: 330
 And bade the Gods this added truth attest,
 (While pure libations crown'd the genial feast)
 That anchor'd in his port the vessel stand,
 To waft the hero to his natal land.
 I for Dulichium urge the watery way, 335
 But first the Ulyssæan wealth survey:
 So rich the value of a store so vast
 Demands the pomp of centuries to waste!
 The darling object of your royal love,
 Was journey'd thence to Dodonean Jove; 340
 By the sure precept of the sylvan shrine,
 To form the conduct of his great design:
 Irresolute of soul, his state to shrowd
 In dark disguise, or come a king avow'd?
 Thus lives your lord; nor longer doom'd to roam:
 Soon will he grace this dear paternal dome.
 By Jove, the source of good, supreme in power!
 By the blest genius of this friendly bower!
 I ratify my speech; before the sun
 His annual longitude of Heaven shall run; 350
 When the pale empress of yon starry train
 In the next month renews her faded wane,
 Ulysses will assert his rightful reign.

What thanks! what boon! reply'd the queen, are due,
 When time shall prove the storied blessing true: 355
 My lord's return should fate no more retard,
 Envy shall sicken at thy vast reward.
 But my prophetic fears, alas! preface,
 The wounds of Destiny's relentless rage.

VI. I long

I long must weep, nor will Ulysses come, 360
 With royal gifts to send you honour'd home!—
 Your other task, ye menial train, forbear:
 Now wash the stranger, and the bed prepare:
 With splendid palls the downy fleece adorn:
 Up-rising early with the purple morn, 365
 His sinews shrunk with age, and stiff with toil,
 In the warm bath foment with fragrant oil.
 Then with Telemachus the social feast
 Partaking free, my sole invited guest;
 Whoe'er neglects to pay distinction due, 370
 The breach of hospitable right may rue.
 The vulgar of my sex I most exceed
 In real fame, when most humane my deed:
 And vainly to the praise of queen aspire,
 If, stranger! I permit that mean attire, 375
 Beneath the feastful bower. A narrow space
 Confines the circle of our destin'd race;
 'Tis ours with good the scanty round to grace. }
 Those who to cruel wrong their state abuse,
 Dreaded in life the mutter'd curse pursues; 380
 By death disrob'd of all their savage powers,
 Then, licens'd rage her hateful prey devours.
 But he whose in-born worth his acts commend,
 Of gentle soul, to human race a friend;
 The wretched he relieves diffuse his fame, 385
 And distant tongues extol the patron-name.
 Princess, he cry'd, in vain your bounties flow
 On me, confirm'd and obstinate in woe,
 When my lov'd Crete receiv'd my final view,
 And from my weeping eyes her cliffs withdrew; 390

These tatter'd weeds (my decent robe resign'd)
 I chose the livery of a woeful mind !
 Nor will my heart-corroding cares abate
 With splendid palls, and canopies of state :
 Low-couch'd on earth, the gift of sleep I scorn, 395
 And catch the glances of the waking morn.
 The delicacy of your courtly train
 To wash a wretched wanderer would disdain ;
 But if, in track of long experience try'd,
 And sad similitude of woes ally'd, 400
 Some wretch reluctant views aerial light,
 To her mean hand assign the friendly rite.
 Pleas'd with his wife reply, the queen rejoin'd :
 Such gentle manners, and so sage a mind,
 In all who grac'd this hospitable bower 405
 I ne'er discern'd, before this social hour.
 Such servant as your humble choice requires,
 To light receiv'd the lord of my desires,
 New from the birth : and with a mother's hand
 His tender bloom to manly growth sustain'd 410
 Of matchless prudence, and a duteous mind ;
 Though now to life's extremest verge declin'd
 Of strength superior to the toil assign'd.—
 Rise, Euryclea ! with officious care
 For the poor friend the cleansing bath prepare : 415
 This debt his correspondent fortunes claim,
 Too like Ulysses, and perhaps the same !
 Thus, old with woes, my fancy paints him now ;
 For age untimely marks the careful brow.
 Instant, obsequious to the mild command, 420
 Sad Euryclea rose : with trembling hand
 She

She veils the torrent of her tearful eyes;
And thus impassion'd to herself replies:

Son of my love, and monarch of my cares!
What pangs for thee this wretched bosom bears!

Are thus by Jove who constant beg his aid
With pious deed and pure devotion paid

He never dar'd defraud the sacred fane,
Of perfect hecatombs in order slain:

There oft implor'd his tutelary power,
Long to protract the sad sepulchral hour;

That, form'd for empire with paternal care,
His realm might recognise an equal heir.

Oh destin'd head! The pious vows are lost;
His God forgets him on a foreign coast!

Perhaps, like thee, poor guest! in wanton pride
The rich insult him, and the young deride!

Conscious of worth revil'd, thy generous mind
The friendly rite of purity declin'd;

My will concurring with my queen's command,
Accept the bath from this obsequious hand.

A strong emotion shakes my anguish'd breast;
In thy whole form Ulysses seems express'd:

Of all the wretched harbour'd on our coast,
None imag'd e'er like thee my master lost.

Thus half discover'd through the dark disguise,
With cool composure feign'd, the chief replies:

You join your suffrage to the public vote;
The same you think, have all beholders thought.

He said. Replenish'd from the purest springs,
The laver straight with busy care she brings:

In the deep vase, that shone like burnish'd gold,
 The boiling fluid temperates the cold.
 Meantime revolving in his thoughtful mind
 The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd; 455
 His face averting from the cracking blaze,
 His shoulders intercept th' unfriendly rays:
 Thus cautious in th' obscure he hop'd to fly
 The curious search of Euryclea's eye.
 Cautious in vain! nor ceas'd the dame to find 460
 The scar, with which his manly knee was sign'd.
 This on Parnassus (combating the boar)
 With glancing rage the tusky savage tore.
 Attended by his brave maternal race,
 His grandsire sent him to the sylvan chace, 465
 Autolycus the bold (a mighty name
 For spotless faith and deeds of martial fame:
 Hermes, his Patron-God, those gifts bestow'd,
 Whose shrine with weanling lambs he wont to load.)
 His course to Ithaca this hero sped, 470
 When the first product of Laertes' bed
 Was new disclos'd to birth; the banquet ends,
 When Euryclea from the queen descends,
 And to his fond embrace the babe commends. }
 "Receive, she cries, your royal daughter's son; 475
 "And name the blessing that your prayers have won."
 Then thus the hoary chief: "My victor arms
 "Have aw'd the realms around with dire alarms;
 "A sure memorial of my dreaded fame
 "The boy shall bear; Ulysses be his name! 480
 "And

“ And when with filial love the youth shall come
 “ To view his mother’s soil, my Delphic dome
 “ With gifts of price shall send him joyous home.” }
 }
 }
 }
 }

Lur’d with the promis’d boon, when youthful prime
 Ended in man, his mother’s natal clime 485

Ulysses fought; with fond affection dear
 Amphithea’s arms receiv’d the royal heir :
 Her ancient * lord an equal joy posselt ;
 Instant he bade prepare the genial feast :

A steer to form the sumptuous banquet bled, 490
 Whose stately growth five flowery summers fed :

His sons divide, and roast with artful care
 The limbs ; then all the tasteful viands share.

Nor ceas’d discourse (the banquet of the soul)

Till Phoebus wheeling to the western goal

Resign’d the skies, and night involv’d the pole. }

Their drooping eyes the slumberous shade oppress’d,

Sated they rose, and all retir’d to rest.

Soon as the morn, new-rob’d in purple light,
 Pierc’d with her golden shafts the rear of night ; 500

Ulysses and his brave maternal race,

The young Autolyce, assay the chace.

Parnassus, thick perplex’d with horrid shades,

With deep-mouth’d hounds the hunter-troop invades :

What-time the sun, from ocean’s peaceful stream, 505

Darts o’er the lawn his horizontal beam.

The pack impatient snuff the tainted gale ;

The thorny wilds the wood-men fierce assail :

And, foremost of the train, his cornel spear

Ulysses wav’d, to rouse the savage war. 510

L 4

Deep

* Autolycus.

Deep in the rough recesses of the wood,
 A lofty copse, the growth of ages, stood:
 Nor winter's boreal blast, nor thunderous shower,
 Nor solar ray, could pierce the shady bower,
 With wither'd foliage strew'd, a heapy store! 515
 The warm pavilion of a dreadful boar.
 Rouz'd by the hounds and hunters mingling cries,
 The savage from his leafy shelter flies:
 With fiery glare his sanguine eye-balls shine,
 And bristles high impale his horrid chine. 520
 Young Ithacus advanc'd, defies the foe,
 Poising his lifted lance in act to throw;
 The savage renders vain the wound decreed,
 And springs impetuous with opponent speed!
 His tusks oblique he aim'd, the knee to gore; 525
 Aslope they glanc'd, the sinewy fibres tore,
 And bar'd the bone: Ulysses undismay'd,
 Soon with redoubled force the wound repay'd;
 To the right shoulder-joint the spear apply'd:
 His further flank with streaming purple dy'd: 530
 On earth he rush'd with agonizing pain;
 With joy, and vast surprize, th' applauding train
 View'd his enormous bulk extended on the plain.
 With bandage firm Ulysses' knee they bound;
 Then, chanting mystic lays, the closing wound 535
 Of sacred melody confess'd the force;
 The tides of life regain'd their azure course.
 Then back they led the youth with loud acelaim;
 Autolycus, enamour'd with his fame,
 Confirm'd the cure; and from the Delphic dome 540
 With added gifts return'd him glorious home.

He safe at Ithaca with joy receiv'd,
Relates the chace, and early praise atchiev'd.

Deep o'er his knee, in seam'd, remain'd the scar:
Which noted token of the woodland war 545

When Euryclea found, th'ablusion ceas'd ;

Down dropp'd the leg, from her slack hand releas'd ;

The mingled fluids from the vase redound ;

The vase reclining floats the floor around !

Smiles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife express'd

Of grief and joy, alternate in her breast.

Her fluttering words in melting murmurs died ;

At length, abrupt—My son ! my king !—she cried.

His neck with fond embrace infolding fast,

Full on the queen her raptur'd eye she cast, 555

Ardent to speak the monarch safe restor'd :

But studious to conceal her royal lord,

Minerva fix'd her mind on views remote,

And from the present bliss abstracts her thought.

His hand to Euryclea's mouth applied, 560

Art thou foredoom'd my pest ? the hero cried :

Thy milky founts my infant lips have drain'd :

And have the fates thy babbling age ordain'd

To violate the life thy youth sustain'd ?

An exile have I told, with weeping eyes, 565

Full twenty annual suns in distant skies :

At length return'd, some God inspires thy breast

To know thy king, and here I stand confess'd.

This Heaven-discover'd truth to thee consign'd,

Reserve the treasure of thy inmost mind : 570

Else, if the Gods my vengeful arm sustain,

And prostrate to my sword the sutor-train :

With

With their lewd mates, thy undistinguish'd age
Shall bleed a victim to vindictive rage.

Then thus rejoin'd the dame, devoid of fear: 575
What words, my son, have pass'd thy lips severe!
Deep in my soul the trust shall lodge secur'd;
With ribs of steel, and marble heart, immur'd.
When Heaven, auspicious to thy right avow'd,
Shall prostrate to thy sword the suitor-crowd; 580
The deeds I'll blazon of the menial fair;
The lewd to death devote, the virtuous spare.

Thy aid avails me not, the chief replied;
My own experience shall their doom decide;
A witness-judge precludes a long appeal: 585
Suffice it thee thy monarch to conceal.

He said: obsequious, with redoubled pace,
She to the fount conveys th' exhausted vase:
The bath renew'd, she ends the pleasing toil.
With plenteous unktion of ambrosial oil. 590
Adjusting to his limbs the tatter'd vest,
His former seat receiv'd the stranger guest;
Whom thus with pensive air the queen address'd: }

Though night, dissolving grief in grateful ease,
Your drooping eyes with soft oppression seize: 595
Awhile, reluctant to her pleasing force,
Suspend the restless hour with sweet discourse.
The day (ne'er brighten'd with a beam of joy!)
My menials, and domestic cares employ:
And unattended by sincere repose, 600
The night assists my ever-wakeful woes:
When nature's hush'd beneath her brooding shade,
My echoing griefs the starry vault invade.

As, when the months are clad in flowery green,
 Sad Philomel in bowery shades unseen, 605
 To vernal airs attunes her varied strains;
 And Itylus sounds warbling o'er the plains:
 Young Itylus, his parents' darling joy!
 Whom chance mislaid the mother to destroy:
 Now doom'd a wakeful bird to wail the beauteous
 boy. }

So in nocturnal solitude forlorn,
 A sad variety of woes I mourn!
 My mind, reflective, in a thorny maze
 Devious from care to care incessant strays.
 Now, wavering doubt succeeds to long despair; 615
 Shall I my virgin-nuptial-vow revere;
 And, joining to my son's my menial train,
 Partake his councils, and assist his reign!
 Or, since, mature in manhood, he deploras
 His dome dishonour'd, and exhausted stores; 620
 Shall I, reluctant, to his will accord;
 And from the peers select the noblest lord?
 So by my choice avow'd, at length decide
 These wasteful love-debates, a mourning bride!
 A visionary thought I'll now relate; 625
 Illustrate, if you know, the shadow'd fate:

A team of twenty geese (a snow-white train!)
 Fed near the limpid lake with golden grain,
 Amuse my penfive hours. The bird of Jove
 Pierce from his mountain-eyrie downward drove; 630
 Each favourite fowl he pounc'd with deathful sway,
 And back triumphant wing'd his airy way.

My

My pitying eyes effus'd a plenteous stream;
 To view their death thus imag'd in a dream:
 With tender sympathy to soothe my soul,
 A troop of matrons, fancy-form'd, condole:
 But whilst with grief and rage my bosom burn'd,
 Sudden the tyrant of the skies return'd:
 Perch'd on the battlements, he thus began,
 (In form an eagle, but in voice a man.)

O Queen! no vulgar vision of the sky
 I come, prophetic of approaching joy!
 View in this plummy form thy victor lord;
 The geese (a glutton race) by thee deplor'd,
 Portend the suitors fated to my sword.
 This said, the pleasing feather'd omen ceas'd:

When, from the downy bands of sleep releas'd,
 Fast by the limpid lake my swan-like train
 I found, insatiate of the golden grain.

The vision self-explain'd (the chief replies)
 Sincere reveals the sanction of the skies:
 Ulysses speaks his own return decreed;
 And by his sword the suitors sure to bleed.

Hard is the talk, and rare, the queen rejoins'd,
 Impending destinies in dreams to find:
 Immur'd within the silent bower of sleep,
 Two portals firm the various phantoms keep:
 Of ivory one; whence flit, to mock the brain,
 Of winged lies a light fantastic train:
 The gate oppos'd pellucid valves adorn,
 And columns fair incas'd with polish'd horn:
 Where images of truth for passage wait,
 With visions manifest of future fate.

Not

Not to this troop, I fear, that phantom soar'd,
 Which spoke Ulysses to his realm restor'd : 665
 Delusive semblance!—but my remnant life
 Heaven shall determine in a gameful strife :
 With that fam'd bow Ulysses taught to bend,
 For me the rival archers shall contend.
 As on the lifted field he us'd to place 670
 Six beams, oppos'd to six in equal space :
 Elanc'd afar by his unerring art,
 Sure through six circlets flew the whizzing dart.
 So, when the sun restores the purple day,
 Their strength and skill the suitors shall assay : 675
 To him the spousal honour is decreed,
 Who through the rings directs the feather'd reed.
 Torn from these walls (where long the kinder Powers
 With pomp and joy have wing'd my youthful hours!)
 On this poor breast no dawn of bliss shall beam ;
 The pleasure past supplies a copious theme
 For many a dreary thought, and many a doleful
 dream !

Propose the sportive lot (the chief replies)
 Nor dread to name yourself the bowyer's prize :
 Ulysses will surprize th' unfinish'd game 685
 Avow'd, and falsify the suitor's claim.

To whom, with grace serene, the queen rejoin'd :
 In all thy speech, what pleasing force I find !
 O'er my suspended woe thy words prevail,
 I part reluctant from the pleasing tale. 690
 But Heaven, that knows what all terrestrials need,
 Repose to night, and toil to day decreed :

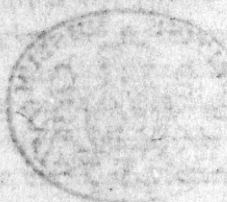
Grateful

Grateful vicissitude! yet me withdrawn;
 Wakeful to weep and watch the tardy dawn
 Establish'd use enjoins; to rest and joy 693
 Estrang'd, since dear Ulysses sail'd to Troy!
 Meantime instructed is the menial tribe
 Your couch to fashion as yourself prescribe.
 Thus affable, her bower the queen ascends;
 The sovereign-step a beauteous train attends; 700
 There imag'd to her soul Ulysses rose;
 Down her pale cheek new-streaming sorrow flows:
 Till soft oblivious shade Minerva spread,
 And o'er her eyes ambrosial slumber shed.

THE
TWENTIETH BOOK

OF THE

O D Y S S E Y.



ARGUMENT.

WHILE Ulysses lies in the vestibule of the palace, he is witness to the disorders of the women. Minerva comforts him, and casts him asleep. At his waking he desires a favourable sign from Jupiter, which is granted. The feast of Apollo is celebrated by the people, and the suitors banquet in the palace. Telemachus exerts his authority amongst them, notwithstanding which, Ulysses is insulted by Ctesippus, and the rest continue in their excesses. Strange prodigies are seen by Theoclymenus the augur, who explains them to the destruction of the wooers.



THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XX.

AN ample hide divine Ulysses spread,
 And form'd of fleecy skins his humble bed
 (The remnants of the spoil the suitor-crowd
 In festival devour'd, and victims vow'd).
 Then o'er the chief, Eurynome the chaste,
 With duteous care, a downy carpet cast:
 With dire revenge his thoughtful bosom glows,
 And, ruminating wrath, he scorns repose.

As thus pavilion'd in the porch he lay
 Scenes of lewd loves his wakeful eyes survey; 10
 Whilst to nocturnal joys impure repair,
 With wanton glee, the prostituted fair.
 His heart with rage this new dishonour stung,
 Wavering his thought in dubious balance hung?
 Or, instant should he quench the guilty flame 15
 With their own blood, and intercept the shame;
 Or to their lust indulge a last embrace,
 And let the peers consummate the disgrace;
 Round his swoln heart the murmurous fury rolls;
 As o'er her young the mother-mastiff growls, 20
 And bays the stranger-groom: so wrath compress'd,
 Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breast.

Poor suffering heart ! he cry'd, support the pain
Of wounded honour, and thy rage restrain.

Not fiercer woes thy fortitude could foil,

25

When the brave partners of thy ten years toil

Dire Polypheme devour'd : I then was freed,

By patient prudence, from the death decreed.

Thus anchor'd safe on Reason's peaceful coast

Tempests of wrath his soul no longer toss'd ;

30

Restless his body rolls, to rage resign'd :

As one who long with pale-ey'd famine pin'd,

The savory cates on glowing embers cast

Incessant turns, impatient for repast ;

Ulysses so, from side to side devolv'd,

55

In self-debate the suitors' doom resolv'd.

When, in the form of mortal nymph array'd,

From Heaven descends the Jove-born Martial Maid ;

And hovering o'er his head in view confess'd,

The Goddess thus her favourite care address'd :

40

O thou, of mortals most inur'd to woes !

Why roll those eyes unfriended of repose ?

Beneath thy palace-roof forget thy care ;

Bless'd in thy queen ! bless'd in thy blooming heir !

Whom, to the Gods when suppliant fathers bow,

45

They name the standard of their dearest vow.

Just is thy kind reproach (the chief rejoin'd) ;

Deeds full of fate distract my various mind

In contemplation wrapp'd. This hostile crew

What single arm hath prowess to subdue ?

50

Or if, by Jove's and thy auxiliar aid,

They're doom'd to bleed ; Oh ! say, celestial Maid :

Where

Where shall Ulysses shun, or how sustain,
Nations embattled to revenge the slain?

Oh, impotence of faith! Minerva cries, 55
If man on frail unknowing man relies,
Doubt you the Gods? Lo! Pallas' self descends,
Inspires thy counsels, and thy toils attends.
In me affianc'd, fortify thy breast,
Though myriads leagu'd thy rightful claim contest:
My sure divinity shall bear the shield,
And edge thy sword to reap the glorious field.
Now pay the debt to craving nature due,
Her faded powers with balmy rest renew.
She ceas'd. Ambrosial slumbers seal his eyes;
His care dissolves in visionary joys:
The Goddess, pleas'd, regains her natal skies. }

Not so the queen: the downy bands of sleep
By grief relax'd, she wak'd again to weep:
A gloomy pause ensued of dumb despair; 70
Then thus her fate invok'd, with fervent prayer:

Diana! speed thy deathful ebony-dart,
And cure the pangs of this convulsive heart.
Snatch me, ye whirlwinds! far from human race,
Toss'd through the void illimitable space: 75
Or, if dismounted from the rapid cloud,
Me with his wheeling wave let Ocean shroud!
So, Pandarus, thy hopes, three orphan-fair,
Were doom'd to wander through the devious air;
Thyself untimely and thy consort dy'd, 80
But four celestials both your cares supply'd,
Venus in tender delicacy rears
With honey, milk, and wine, their infant years:

Imperial Juno to their youth assign'd
 A form majestic, and sagacious mind :
 With shapely growth Diana grac'd the bloom;
 And Pallas taught the texture of the loom.
 But whilst, to learn their lots in nuptial love,
 Bright Cytherea sought the bower of Jove
 (The God supreme, to whose eternal eye
 The registers of Fate expanded lie ;)
 Wing'd harpies snatch'd th' unguarded charge away,
 And to the Furies bore a grateful prey.
 Be such my lot ! Or thou, Diana, speed
 Thy shaft, and send me joyful to the dead ;
 To seek my lord among the warrior-train,
 Ere second vows my bridal faith profane.
 When woes the waking sense alone assail ;
 Whilst night extends her soft oblivious veil,
 Of other wretches care the torture ends ;
 No truce the warfare of my heart suspends !
 The night renews the day-distracting theme,
 And airy terrors sable every dream.
 The last alone a kind illusion wrought,
 And to my bed my lov'd Ulysses brought
 In manly bloom, and each majestic grace,
 As when for Troy he left my fond embrace ;
 Such raptures in my beating bosom rise,
 I deem it sure a vision of the skies.

Thus, whilst Aurora mounts her purple throne,
 In audible laments she breathes her moan ;
 The sounds assault Ulysses' wakeful ear :
 Mis-judging of the cause, a sudden fear

Of his arrival known, the chief alarms ;
 He thinks the queen is rushing to his arms. 115
 Up-springing from his couch, with active haste
 The fleece and carpet in the dome he plac'd
 (The hide, without, imbib'd the morning air) ;
 And thus the Gods invok'd, with ardent prayer :

Jove, and ethereal thrones ! with heaven to friend,
 If the long series of my woes shall end,
 Of human race now rising from repose
 Let one a blissful omen here disclose ;
 And, to confirm my faith, propitious Jove,
 Vouchsafe the sanction of a sign above ! 125

Whilst lowly thus the chief adoring bows,
 The pitying God his guardian aid avows.
 Loud from a sapphire sky his thunder sounds :
 With springing hope the hero's heart rebounds.
 Soon, with consummate joy to crown his prayer, 130
 An omen'd voice invades his ravish'd ear.
 Beneath a pile, that close the dome adjoin'd,
 Twelve female slaves the gift of Ceres grind ;
 Task'd for the royal board to bolt the bran .
 From the pure flour (the growth and strength of man),
 Discharging to the day the labour due,
 Now early to repose the rest withdrew ;
 One maid, unequal to the task assign'd,
 Still turn'd the toilsome mill with anxious mind ;
 And thus in bitterness of soul divin'd : }

Father of Gods and men ; whose thunders roll
 O'er the cerulean vault, and shake the pole ;
 Whoe'er from Heaven has gain'd this rare ostent
 (Of granted vows a certain signal sent).

In this blest moment of accepted prayer, 145
 Piteous, regard a wretch consum'd with care!
 Instant, O Jove! confound the suitor-train,
 For whom o'er-toil'd I grind the golden grain;
 Far from this dome the lewd devourers cast,
 And be this festival decreed their last! 150

Big with their doom denounc'd in earth and sky,
 Ulysses' heart dilates with secret joy.
 Meantime the menial train with unctuous wood
 Heap'd high the genial hearth, Vulcanian food:
 When, early dress'd, advanc'd the royal heir: 155
 With manly grasp he wav'd a martial spear,
 A radiant sabre grac'd his purple zone,
 And on his foot the golden sandal shone.
 His steps impetuous to the portal press'd;
 And Euryclea thus he there address'd: 160

Say thou, to whom my youth-its nurture owes,
 Was care for due refection and repose
 Bestow'd the stranger-guest? Or waits he griev'd,
 His age not honour'd, nor his wants reliev'd?
 Promiscuous grace on all the queen confers 165
 (In woes bewilder'd, oft' the wisest errs).
 The wordy vagrant to the dole aspires,
 And modest worth with noble scorn retires.

She thus: Oh! cease that ever honour'd name
 To blemish now; it ill deserves your blame: 170
 A bowl of generous wine suffic'd the guest;
 In vain the queen the night-refection press'd;
 Nor would he court repose in downy state,
 Unblest'd, abandon'd to the rage of Fate!

A hide

A hide beneath the portico was spread, 175
And fleecy skins compos'd an humble bed :
A downy carpet, cast with duteous care,
Secur'd him from the keen nocturnal air.

His cornel javelin pois'd with regal port,
To the sage Greeks conven'd in Themis' court, 180
Forth-issuing from the dome the prince repair'd ;
Two dogs of chace, a lion-hearted guard,
Behind him sourly stalk'd. Without delay
The dame divides the labour of the day ;
Thus urging to the toil the menial train.
What marks of luxury the marble stain !
Its wonted lustre let the floor regain ;
The seats with purple clothe in order dæ ;
And let th' absterfive sponge the board renew :
Let some refresh the vase's sullied mold ; 190
Some bid the goblets boast their native gold :
Some to the spring, with each a jar, repair,
And copious waters pure for bathing bear :
Dispatch ! for soon the suitors will assay
The lunar feast-rites to the God of day. 190

She said ; with duteous haste a bevy fair
Of twenty virgins to the spring repair :
With varied toils the rest adorn the dome.
Magnificent, and blithe, the suitors come.
Some wield the sounding ax ; the dodder'd oaks 200
Divide, 'obedient to the forceful strokes.
Soon from the fount, with each a brimming urn,
(Eumæus in their train) the maids return.
Three porkers for the feast, all brawny-chin'd,
He brought ; the choicest of the tusky kind :

In lodgements first secure his care he view'd,
 Then to the king his friendly speech renew'd :
 Now say sincere, my guest ! the suitor train
 Still treat they worth with lordly dull disdain ;
 Or speaks their deed a bounteous mind humane ?

Some pitying God. (Ulysses sad reply'd)
 With vollied vengeance blast their towering pride !
 No conscious blush, no sense of right, restrains
 The tides of lust that swell their boiling veins :
 From vice to vice their appetites are toss'd,
 All cheaply sated at another's cost !

While thus the chief his woes indignant told,
 Melanthius, master of the bearded fold,
 The goodliest goats of all the royal herd
 Spontaneous to the suitors' feast preferr'd :
 Two grooms assistant bore the victims bound ;
 With quavering cries the vaulted roofs resound :
 And to the chief austere, aloud began
 The wretch unfriendly to the race of man :

Here, vagrant, still ? offensive to my lords !
 Blows have more energy than airy words ;
 These arguments I'll use : nor conscious shame,
 Nor threats, thy bold intrusion will reclaim.
 On this high feast the meanest vulgar boast
 A plenteous board ! Hence ! seek another host !

Rejoinder to the churl the king disdain'd ;
 But shook his head, and rising wrath restrain'd.

From Cephalenia cross the surgy main
 Philæti^{us} late arriv'd, a faithful swain.
 A steer ungrateful to the bull's embrace,
 And goats he brought, the pride of all their race :

Imported

Imported in a shallop not his own :
 The dome re-echoed to their mingled moan.
 Straight to the guardian of the bristly kind
 He thus began, benevolent of mind : 240
 What guest is he, of such majestic air ?
 His lineage and paternal clime declare :
 Dim through th' eclipse of Fate, the rays divine
 Of sovereign state with faded splendour shine.
 If monarchs by the Gods are plung'd in woe, 245
 To what abyss are we foredoom'd to go !
 Then affable he thus the chief address'd,
 Whilst with pathetic warmth his hand he press'd :
 Stranger ! may Fate a milder aspect show,
 And spin thy future with a whiter clue ! 250
 O Jove ! for ever deaf to human cries ;
 The Tyrant, not the Father of the skies !
 Unpiteous of the race thy will began !
 The fool of Fate, thy manufacture, man,
 With penury, contempt, repulse, and care, 255
 The galling load of life is doom'd to bear.
 Ulysses from his state a wanderer still,
 Upbraids thy power, thy wisdom, or thy will :
 O monarch ever dear !—O man of woe !—
 Fresh flow my tears, and shall for ever flow ! 260
 Like thee, poor stranger-guest, denied his home !
 Like thee, in rags obscene, decreed to roam !
 Or, haply perish'd on some distant coast,
 In Stygian gloom he glides a pensive ghost !
 Oh ! grateful for the good his bounty gave, 265
 I'll grieve, till sorrow sink me to the grave !

His

His kind protecting hand my youth prefer'd,
 The regent of his Cephalenian herd :
 With vast increase beneath my care it spreads,
 A stately breed ! and blackens far the meads. 270
 Constrain'd, the choicest beeves I thence import
 To cram these cormorants that crowd his court :
 Who in partition seek his realm to share ;
 Nor human right, nor wrath divine revere.
 Since here resolv'd oppressive these reside, 275
 Contending doubts my anxious heart divide :
 Now to some foreign clime inclin'd to fly,
 And with the royal herd protection buy :
 Then happier thoughts return the nodding scale,
 Light mounts despair, alternate hopes prevail : 280
 In opening prospects of ideal joy,
 My king returns ; the proud usurpers die.

To whom the chief : In thy capacious mind
 Since daring zeal with cool debate is join'd ;
 Attend a deed already ripe in Fate ; 285
 Attest, O Jove, the truth I now relate !
 This sacred truth attest each genial Power,
 Who bless the board, and guard this friendly bower !
 Before thou quit the dome (nor long delay)
 Thy wish produc'd in act, with pleas'd survey, 290
 Thy wondering eyes shall view : his rightful reign
 By arms avow'd Ulysses shall regain,
 And to the shades devote the suitor train.

O Jove supreme ! the raptur'd swain replies,
 With deed consummate soon the promis'd joys !
 These aged nerves, with new-born vigour strung,
 In that blest cause should emulate the young—

Assents

Assents Eumæus to the prayer address'd :
And equal ardors fire his loyal breast.

Meantime the suitors urge the prince's fate, 300.

And deathful arts employ the dire debate :

When, in his airy tour, the bird of Jove

Truss'd with his sinewy pounce a trembling dove ;

Sinister to their hope ! This omen ey'd

Amphinomus, who thus presaging cry'd : 305.

The Gods from force and fraud the prince defend ;

O peers ! the sanguinary scheme suspend :

Your future thought let sable Fate employ ;

And give the present hour to genial joy.

From council straight th' assenting peerage ceas'd,

And in the dome prepar'd the genial feast.

Dis-rob'd their vests apart in order lay,

Then all with speed succinct the victims slay :

With sheep and shaggy goats the porkers bled,

And the proud steer was on the marble spread. 315.

With fire prepar'd, they deal the morsels round,

Wine rosy-bright the brimming goblets crown'd,

By sage Eumæus borne : the purple tide

Melanthius from an ample jar supplied :

High canisters of bread Philæti^{us} plac'd ; 320.

And eager all devour the rich repast.

Dispos'd apart, Ulysses shares the treat !

A trivet-table, and ignobler seat,

The prince appoints ; but to his fire assigns

The tasteful inwards, and nectareous wines. 325.

Partake, my guest, he cry'd, without control

The social feast, and drain the cheering bowl :

Dread

Dread not the railer's laugh, nor ruffian's rage;
 No vulgar roof protects thy honour'd age;
 This dome a refuge to thy wrongs shall be, 330
 From my great fire too soon devolv'd to me!
 Your violence and scorn, ye suitors, cease,
 Left arms avenge the violated peace.

Aw'd by the prince, so haughty, brave, and young,
 Rage gnaw'd the lip, amazement chain'd the tongue.
 Be patient, peers! at length Antinous cries;
 The threats of vain imperious youth despise:
 Would Jove permit the meditated blow,
 That stream of eloquence should cease to flow.

Without reply vouchsaf'd, Antinous ceas'd: 340
 Meanwhile the pomp of festival increas'd:
 By heralds rank'd, in marshal'd order move
 The city-tribes, to pleas'd Apollo's grove:
 Beneath the verdure of which awful shade,
 The lunar hecatomb they grateful laid;
 Partook the sacred feast, and ritual honours paid. }
 But the rich banquet in the dome prepar'd,
 (An humble side-board set) Ulysses shar'd.
 Observant of the prince's high behest,
 His menial train attend the stranger-guest: 350
 Whom Pallas with unpardoning fury fir'd,
 By lordly pride and keen reproach inspir'd.
 A Samian Peer, more studious than the rest
 Of vice, who teem'd with many a dead-born jest;
 And urg'd, for title to a consort queen, 355
 Unnumber'd acres arable and green
 (Ctesippus nam'd); this lord Ulysses ey'd,
 And thus burst out th' impostumate with pride:

The

The sentence I propose, ye peers, attend :
 Since due regard must wait the prince's friend, 360
 Let each a token of esteem bestow ;
 This gift acquits the dear respect I owe ;
 With which he nobly may discharge his seat,
 And pay the menials for the master's treat.

He said : and of the steer before him plac'd, 365
 That sinewy fragment at Ulysses cast,
 Where to the pastern-bone, by nerves combin'd,
 The well-horn'd foot indissolubly join'd ;
 Which whizzing high the wall unseemly sign'd. }
 The chief indignant grins a ghastly smile ; 370
 Revenge and scorn within his bosom boil :
 When thus the prince with pious rage inflam'd :
 Had not th' inglorious wound thy malice aim'd
 Fall'n guiltless of the mark, my certain spear
 Had made thee buy the brutal triumph dear : 375
 Nor should thy fire, a queen his daughter boast ;
 The suitor, now, had vanish'd in a ghost :
 No more, ye lewd compeers, with lawless power
 Invade my dome, my herds and flocks devour :
 For genuine worth of age mature to know 380
 My grape shall redden, and my harvest grow.
 Or, if each other's wrongs ye still support,
 With rapes and riot to profane my court ;
 What single arm with numbers can contend ?
 On me let all your lifted swords descend,
 And with my life such vile dishonours end. }

A long cessation of discourse ensued,
 By gentler Agelaus thus renew'd :

A just

A just reproof, ye peers! your rage restrain,
 From the protected guest, and menial train;
 And, prince! to stop the source of future ill,
 Assent yourself, and gain the royal will,
 Whilst hope prevail'd to see your sire restor'd,
 Of right the queen refus'd a second lord.
 But who so vain of faith, so blind to fate,
 To think he still survives to claim the state?
 Now press the sovereign dame with warm desire
 To wed, as wealth or worth her choice inspire:
 The lord selected to the nuptial joys,
 Far hence will lead the long-contested prize:
 Whilst in paternal pomp, with plenty bless'd,
 You reign, of this imperial dome possess'd;

Sage and serene Telemachus replies:
 By him at whose behest the thunder flies,
 And by the name on earth I most revere,
 By great Ulysses and his woes, I swear
 (Who never must review his dear domain;
 Inroll'd, perhaps, in Pluto's dreary train)
 Whene'er her choice the royal dame avows,
 My bridal gifts shall load the future spouse:
 But from this dome my parent queen to chase!
 From me, ye Gods! avert such dire disgrace.

But Pallas clouds with intellectual gloom
 The suitors' souls, insensate of their doom!
 A mirthful phrenzy seiz'd the fated croud;
 The roofs resound with causeless laughter loud:
 Floating in gore, portentous to survey!
 In each discolour'd vase the viands lay:

Then

Then down each cheek the tears spontaneous flow,
And sudden sighs precede approaching woe. 420

In vision rapt; the * Hyperæan seer
Uprose, and thus divin'd the vengeance near:

Oh race to death devote! with Stygian shade
Each destin'd peer impending Fates invade:

With tears your wan distorted cheeks are drown'd; 425
With sanguine drops the walls are rubied round:

Thick swarms the spacious hall with howling ghosts
To people Orcus and the burning coasts!

Nor gives the sun his golden orb to roll,
But universal night usurps the pole! 430

Yet warn'd in vain, with laughter loud elate
The peers reproach the sure divine of Fate;

And thus Eurymachus: The dotard's mind
To every sense is lost, to reason blind:

Swift from the dome conduct the slave away; 435
Let him in open air behold the day.

Tax not (the Heaven-illumin'd seer rejoin'd)
Of rage, or folly, my prophetic mind.

No clouds of error dim th' ethereal rays,
Her equal power each faithful sense obeys. 440

Unguided hence my trembling steps I bend,
Far hence, before yon hovering deaths descend;

Left, the ripe harvest of revenge begun,
I share the doom ye suitors cannot shun.

This said, to sage Piræus sped the seer, 445
His honour'd host, a welcome inmate there.

O'er the protracted feast the suitors sit,
And aim to wound the prince with pointleß wit:

Cries

* Theoclymenus.

Cries one, with scornful leer and mimic voice,
 Thy charity we praise, but not thy choice; 450
 Why such profusion of indulgence shown
 To this poor, timorous, toil-detesting drone?
 That other feeds on planetary schemes,
 And pays his host with hideous noon-day dreams.
 But, prince! for once, at least, believe a friend, 455
 To some Sicilian mart these courtiers send,
 Where, if they yield their freight across the main,
 Dear sell the slaves! demand no greater gain.

Thus jovial they: but nought the prince replies;
 Full on his fire he roll'd his ardent eyes; 460
 Impatient straight to flesh his virgin-sword,
 From the wise chief he waits the deathful word.
 Nigh in her bright alcove, the pensive queen
 To see the circlet sate, of all unseen.
 Sated at length they rise, and bid prepare 465
 An eve-repast, with equal cost and care:
 But vengeful Pallas, with preventing speed,
 A feast proportion'd to their crimes decreed;
 A feast of death! the feasters doom'd to bleed!

THE
TWENTY-FIRST BOOK
OF THE

O D Y S S E Y.



VOL. IV.

N

ARGUMENT.

THE BENDING OF ULYSSES'S BOW.

PENELOPE, to put an end to the solicitation of the suitors, proposes to marry the person who shall first bend the bow of Ulysses, and shoot through the ringlets. After their attempts have proved ineffectual, Ulysses, taking Eumæus and Philætiús apart, discovers himself to them; then returning, desires leave to try his strength at the bow, which, though refused with indignation by the suitors, Penelope and Telemachus cause it to be delivered to his hands. He bends it immediately, and shoots through all the rings. Jupiter in the same instant thunders from heaven; Ulysses accepts the omen, and gives a sign to Telemachus, who stands ready armed at his side.



THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXI.

AND Pallas now, to raise the rival fires,
 With her own art Penelope inspires :
 Who now can bend Ulysses' bow, and wing
 The well-aim'd arrow through the distant ring,
 Shall end the strife, and win th' imperial dame; 5
 But discord and black death await the game !

The prudent queen the lofty stair ascends,
 At distance due a virgin-train attends ;
 A brazen key she held, the handle turn'd,
 With steel and polish'd elephant adorn'd : 10
 Swift to the inmost room she bent her way,
 Where safe repos'd the royal treasures lay ;
 There shone high-heap'd the labour'd brass and ore,
 And there the bow which great Ulysses bore ;
 And there the quiver, where now guiltless slept 15
 Those winged deaths that many a matron wept.

This gift, long since when Sparta's shores he trod,
 On young Ulysses Iphitus bestow'd ;
 Beneath Orilochus's roof they met ;
 One loss was private, one a public debt ; 20
 Messena's state from Ithaca detains
 Three hundred sheep, and all the shepherd-swains ;

And to the youthful prince to urge the laws,
 The king and elders trust their common cause.
 But Iphitus, employ'd on other cares, 25
 Search'd the wide country for his wandering mares,
 And mules, the strongest of the labouring kind;
 Hapless to search! more hapless still to find!
 For journeying on to Hercules, at length
 That lawless wretch, that man of brutal strength, 30
 Deaf to Heaven's voice, the social rite transgress'd;
 And for the beauteous mares destroy'd his guest:
 He gave the bow! and on Ulysses' part
 Receiv'd a pointed sword and missile dart:
 Of luckless friendship on a foreign shore 35
 Their first, last pledges; for they met no more!
 The bow, bequeath'd by this unhappy hand,
 Ulysses bore not from his native land;
 Nor in the front of battle taught to bend,
 But kept, in dear memorial of his friend. 40
 Now gently winding up the fair ascent,
 By many an easy step, the matron went;
 Then o'er the pavements glides with grace divine,
 (With polish'd oak the level pavements shine)
 The folding gates a dazzling light display'd, 45
 With pomp of various architrave o'erlaid.
 The bolt, obedient to the filken string,
 Forsakes the staple as she pulls the ring;
 The wards respondent to the key turn round;
 The bars fall back; the flying valves resound; 50
 Loud as a bull makes hill and valley ring,
 So roar'd the lock when it releas'd the spring.

She

She moves majestic through the wealthy room,
Where treasur'd garments cast a rich perfume;
There from the column where aloft it hung, 55
Reach'd, in its splendid case, the bow unstrung;
Across her knees she laid the well-known bow,
And pensive fate, and tears began to flow.

To full satiety of grief she mourns,
Then silent to the joyous hall returns, 60
To the proud suitors bears in pensive state
Th' unbended bow, and arrows wing'd with fate.

Behind, her train the polish'd coffer brings,
Which held th' alternate brags and silver rings,
Full in the portal the chaste queen appears, 65
And with her veil conceals the coming tears :
On either side awaits a virgin fair ;
While thus the matron, with majestic air :

Say you, whom these forbidden walls inclose,
For whom my victims bleed, my vintage flows ; 70
If these neglected, faded charms can move ?

Or is it but a vain pretence, you love ?
If I the prize, if me you seek to wife,
Hear the conditions, and commence the strife :

Who first Ulysses' wondrous bow shall bend, 75
And through twelve ringlets the fleet arrow send,
Him will I follow, and forsake my home,
For him forsake this lov'd, this wealthy dome,
Long, long the scene of all my past delight,
And still to last, the vision of my night ! 80

Graceful she said, and bade Eumæus show
The rival peers the ringlets and the bow.

From his full eyes the tears unbidden spring,
 Touch'd at the dear memorials of his king.
 Philæti^{us} too relents, but secret shed 85
 The tender drops. Antinous saw, and said :

Hence to your fields, you rusticks ! hence away,
 Nor stain with grief the pleasures of the day ;
 Nor to the royal heart recall in vain
 The sad remembrance of a perish'd man. 90
 Enough her precious tears already flow—
 Or share the feast with due respect, or go }
 To weep abroad, and leave us to the bow : }
 No vulgar task ! Ill suits this courtly crew
 That stubborn horn which brave Ulysses drew. 95
 I well remember (for I gaz'd him o'er
 While yet a child) what majesty he bore !

And still (all infant as I was) retain
 The port, the strength, the grandeur of the man.

He said, but in his soul fond joys arise, 100
 And his proud hopes already win the prize.
 To speed the flying shaft through every ring,
 Wretch ! is not thine ! the arrows of the king }
 Shall end those hopes, and Fate is on the wing ! }

Then thus Telemachus : Some God, I find, 105
 With pleasing phrenzy has possess'd my mind ;
 When a lov'd mother threatens to depart,
 Why with this ill-tim'd gladness leaps my heart ?
 Come then, ye suitors ! and dispute a prize
 Richer than all th' Achaian state supplies, 110
 Than all proud Argos, or Mycæna knows,
 Than all our isles or continents inclose :

A woman

A woman matchless, and almost divine,
Fit for the praise of every tongue but mine.
No more excuses then, no more delay; 115
Haste to the trial—Lo! I lead the way.
I too may try, and if this arm can wing
The feather'd arrow through the destin'd ring;
Then if no happier knight the conquest boast,
I shall not sorrow for a mother lost; 120
But, blest in her, possess these arms alone,
Heir of my father's strength, as well as throne.

He spoke; then, rising, his broad sword unbound,
And cast his purple garment on the ground.
A trench he open'd; in a line he plac'd 125
The level axes, and the points made fast
(His perfect skill the wondering gazers ey'd;
The game as yet unseen, as yet untry'd.)
Then, with a manly pace, he took his stand;
And grasp'd the bow, and twang'd it in his hand. 130
Three times, with beating heart, he made essay;
Three times, unequal to the task, gave way:
A modest boldness on his cheek appear'd;
And thrice he hop'd, and thrice again he fear'd,
The fourth had drawn it. The great sire with joy 135
Beheld, but with a sign forbade the boy.
His ardour straight th' obedient prince suppress'd,
And, artful, thus the suitor-train address'd:

Oh, lay the cause on youth yet immature!
(For Heaven forbid such weakness should endure!)
How shall this arm, unequal to the bow,
Retort an insult, or repel a foe?

But you! whom Heaven with better nerves has blest,
Accept the trial, and the prize contest.

He cast the bow before him, and apart 145
Against the polish'd quiver propt the dart.

Resuming then his seat, Epitheus' son
The bold Antinous to the rest begun:

"From where the goblet first begins to flow,

"From right to left, in order take the bow; 150

"And prove your several strengths"—The princes
heard,

And first Leiodes, blameless priest, appear'd:

The eldest born of Oenops' noble race,

Who next the goblet held his holy place:

He, only he, of all the suitor-throng, 155

Their deeds detested, and abjur'd the wrong.

With tender hands the stubborn horn he strains,

The stubborn horn resisted all his pains!

Already in despair he gives it o'er:

Take it who will, he cries, I strive no more. 160

What numerous deaths attend this fatal bow!

What souls and spirits shall it send below!

Better, indeed, to die, and fairly give

Nature her debt, than disappointed live,

With each new sun to some new hope a prey, 165

Yet still to-morrow falser than to-day.

How long in vain Penelope we sought!

This bow shall ease us of that idle thought,

And send us with some humbler wife to live,

Whom gold shall gain, or destiny shall give. 170

Thus speaking, on the floor the bow he plac'd,

(With rich inlay the various floor was grac'd)

At

At distance far the feather'd shaft he throws,
And to the seat returns from whence he rose.

To him Antinous thus with fury said: 175
What words ill-omen'd from thy lips have fled!

Thy coward-function ever is in fear;
Those arms are dreadful which thou canst not bear.

Why should this bow be fatal to the brave?
Because the priest is born a peaceful slave. 180

Mark then what others can—He ended there,
And bade Melanthius a vast pile prepare;

He gives it instant flame: then fast beside
Spreads o'er an ample board a bullock's hide.

With melted lard they soak the weapon o'er, 185
Chafe every knot, and supple every pore.

Vain all their art, and all their strength as vain;
The bow inflexible resists their pain.

The force of great Eurymachus alone
And bold Antinous, yet untry'd, unknown: 190

Those only now remain'd; but those confess'd
Of all the train the mightiest and the best.

Then from the hall, and from the noisy crew,
The masters of the herd and flock withdrew.

The king observes them: he the hall forsakes, 195
And, past the limits of the court, o'ertakes.

Then thus with accent mild Ulysses spoke:
Ye faithful guardians of the herd and flock!

Shall I the secret of my breast conceal,
Or (as my soul now dictates) shall I tell? 200

Say, should some favouring God restore again
The lost Ulysses to his native reign?

How

How beat your hearts? what aid would you afford,
To the proud suitors, or your ancient lord?

Philætius thus: Oh were thy word not vain! 205
Would mighty Jove restore that man again!
These aged sinews with new vigour strung
In his blest cause should emulate the young.
With equal vows Eumæus too implor'd
Each Power above, with wishes for his lord. 210

He saw their secret souls, and thus began:
Those vows the Gods accord: behold the man!
Your own Ulysses! twice ten years detain'd
By woes and wanderings from this hapless land;
At length he comes; but comes despis'd, unknown,
And finding faithful you, and you alone.
All else have cast him from their very thought,
Ev'n in their wishes, and their prayers forgot!
Hear then, my friends: If Jove this arm succeed,
And give yon' impious revelers to bleed; 220
My care shall be, to bless your future lives
With large possessions, and with faithful wives;
Fast by my palace shall your domes ascend,
And each on young Telemachus attend,
And each be call'd his brother, and my friend. }
To give you firmer faith, now trust your eye;
Lo! the broad scar indent'd on my thigh,
When with Autolycus's sons, of yore,
On Parnass' top I chac'd the tusk'd boar:
His ragged vest then drawn aside disclos'd 230
The sign conspicuous, and the scar expos'd:
Eager they view'd; with joy they stood amaz'd;
With tear-full eyes o'er all their master gaz'd:

Around

Around his neck their longing arms they cast,
His head, his shoulders, and his knees embrac'd : 235
Tears follow'd tears ; no word was in their power :
In solemn silence fell the kindly shower.

The king too weeps, the king too grasps their hands,
And moveless, as a marble fountain, stands.

Thus had their joy wept down the setting sun, 240
But first the wife man ceas'd, and thus begun :
Enough—on other cares your thought employ,
For danger waits on all untimely joy,
Full many foes, and fierce, observe us near :
Some may betray, and yonder walls may hear. 245
Re-enter then, not all at once, but stay
Some moments you, and let me lead the way.

To me, neglected as I am, I know
The haughty suitors will deny the bow :
But thou, Eumæus, as 'tis borne away, 250
Thy master's weapon to his hand convey.
At every portal let some matron wait,
And each lock fast the well-compacted gate :
Close let them keep, whate'er invades their ear ;
Though arms, or shouts, or dying groans, they hear.
To thy strict charge, Philætius, we consign
The court's main gate : to guard that pass be thine.

This said, he first return'd : the faithful swains
At distance follow, as their king ordains.
Before the flame Eurymachus now stands, 260
And turns the bow, and chafes it with his hands :
Still the tough bow unmov'd. The lofty man
Sigh'd from his mighty soul, and thus began :

I mourn

I mourn the common cause : for, oh, my friends !
 On me, on all, what grief, what shame attends ! 265
 Not the lost nuptials can affect me more,
 (For Greece has beauteous dames on every shore)
 But baffled thus ; confess'd so far below
 Ulysses' strength, as not to bend his bow !
 How shall all ages our attempt deride ! 270
 Our weakness scorn ! Antinous thus reply'd :

Not so, Eurymachus ; that no man draws
 The wondrous bow, attend another cause.
 Sacred to Phœbus is the solemn day,
 Which thoughtless we in games would waste away :
 Till the next dawn this ill-tim'd strife forego,
 And here leave fix'd the ringlets in a row.
 Now bid the sewer approach, and let us join
 In due libations, and in rites divine,
 So end our night : before the day shall spring, 280
 The choicest offerings let Melanthius bring :
 Let then to Phœbus' name the fatted thighs
 Feed the rich smokes, high curling to the skies.
 So shall the patron of these arts bestow
 (For his the gift) the skill to bend the bow. 285

They heard well-pleas'd : the ready heralds bring
 The cleansing waters from the limpid spring :
 The goblet high with rosy wine they crown'd,
 In order circling to the peers around.
 That rite complete, uprose the thoughtful man, 290
 And thus his meditated scheme began :

If what I ask your noble minds approve,
 Ye peers and rivals in the royal love !

Chief

Chief if it hurt not great Antinous' ear,
 (Whose sage decision I with wonder hear) 295
 And if Eurymachus the motion please;
 Give Heaven this day, and rest the bow in peace.
 To-morrow let your arms dispute the prize,
 And take it he, the favour'd of the skies!
 But, since till then this trial you delay, 300
 Trust it one moment to my hands to-day:
 Fain would I prove, before your judging eyes,
 What once I was, whom wretched you despise;
 If yet this arm its ancient force retain;
 Or if my woes (a long-continued train) }
 And wants and insults, make me less than man? }
 Rage flash'd in lightning from the suitors eyes,
 Yet mix'd with terror at the bold emprise.
 Antinous then: Oh, miserable guest!
 Is common sense quite banish'd from thy breast? 305
 Suffic'd it not within the palace plac'd
 To sit distinguish'd, with our presence grac'd,
 Admitted here with princes to confer,
 A man unknown, a needy wanderer?
 To copious wine this insolence we owe, 315
 And much thy betters wine can overthrow:
 The great Eurytion when this phrenzy stung,
 Pirithous' roofs with frantic riot rung;
 Boundless the Centaur rag'd; till one and all
 The heroes rose, and dragg'd him from the hall; 320
 His nose they shorten'd, and his ears they slit,
 And sent him sober'd home with better wit.
 Hence with long war the double race was curs'd,
 Fatal to all, but to th' aggressor first.

Such fate I prophesy our guest attends, 335
 If here this interdicted bow he bends :
 Nor shall these walls such insolence contain ;
 The first fair wind transports him o'er the main ;
 Where Echetus to death the guilty brings,
 (The worst of mortals, ev'n the worst of kings.) 330
 Better than that, if thou approve our cheer ;
 Cease the mad strife, and share our bounty here.

To this the queen her just dislike express'd :
 'Tis impious, prince, to harm the stranger guest,
 Base to insult who bears a suppliant's name, 335
 And some respect Telemachus may claim.
 What, if th' Immortals on the man bestow
 Sufficient strength to draw the mighty bow,
 Shall I, a queen, by rival chiefs ador'd,
 Accept a wandering stranger for my lord ? 340
 A hope so idle never touch'd his brain :
 Then ease your bosoms of a fear so vain.
 Far be he banish'd from this stately scene
 Who wrongs his princess with a thought so mean.

Oh fair ! and wisest of so fair a kind ! 345
 (Respectful thus Eurymachus rejoin'd)
 Mov'd by no weak surmise, but sense of shame,
 We dread the all-arraigning voice of Fame ;
 We dread the censure of the meanest slave,
 The weakest woman : all can wrong the brave. 350
 " Behold what wretches to the bed pretend
 " Of that brave chief, whose bow they could not bend !
 " In came a beggar of the strolling crew,
 " And did what all those princes could not do."
 Thus will the common voice our deed defame, 355
 And thus posterity upbraid our name,

To whom the queen : If fame engage your views,
 Forbear those acts which infamy pursues ;
 Wrong and oppression no renown can raise ;
 Know, friend ! that virtue is the path to praise. 360
 The stature of our guest, his port, his face,
 Speak him descended from no vulgar race.
 To him the bow, as he desires, convey ;
 And to his hand if Phœbus give the day,
 Hence to reward his merit he shall bear 365
 A two-edg'd falchion and a shining spear,
 Embroider'd sandals, a rich cloak and vest,
 And safe conveyance to his port of rest.

O royal mother ! ever-honour'd name !
 Permit me, (cries Telemachus) to claim 370
 A son's just right. No Grecian prince but I
 Has power this bow to grant, or to deny.
 Of all that Ithaca's rough hills contain,
 And all wide Elis' courser-breeding plain ;
 To me alone my father's arms descend, 375
 And mine alone they are, to give or lend.
 Retire, O queen, thy household task resume,
 Tend with thy maids the labours of the loom ;
 The bow, the darts, and arms of chivalry,
 These cares to man belong, and most to me. 380

Mature beyond his years, the queen admir'd
 His sage reply, and with her train retir'd :
 There, in her chamber as she sat apart,
 Revolv'd his words, and plac'd them in her heart.
 On her Ulysses then she fix'd her soul,
 Down her fair cheek the tears abundant roll, 385
 Till

Till gentle Pallas, piteous of her cries,
 In slumber clos'd her silver-streaming eyes.
 Now through the press the bow Eumæus bore,
 And all was riot, noise, and wild uproar. 390
 Hold ! lawless rustic ! whither wilt thou go ?
 To whom, insensate, dost thou bear the bow ?
 Exil'd for this to some sequester'd den,
 Far from the sweet society of men,
 To thy own dogs a prey thou shalt be made ; 395
 If Heaven and Phœbus lend the suitors aid.

Thus they. Aghast he laid the weapon down,
 But bold Telemachus thus urg'd him on :
 Proceed, false slave, and slight their empty words ;
 What ! hopes the fool to please so many lords ? 400
 Young as I am, thy prince's vengeful hand
 Stretch'd forth in wrath, shall drive thee from the land.
 Oh ! could the vigour of this arm as well
 Th' oppressive suitors from my walls expell !
 Then what a shoal of lawless men should go 405
 To fill with tumult the dark courts below !

The suitors with a scornful smile survey
 The youth, indulging in the genial day.
 Eumæus, thus encourag'd, hastes to bring
 The strife-full bow, and gives it to the king. 410
 Old Euryclea calling then aside,
 Hear what Telemachus enjoins (he cry'd)
 At every portal let some matron wait,
 And each lock fast the well-compacted gate ;
 And if unusual sounds invade their ear,
 If arms, or shouts, or dying groans they hear,

Let

Let none to call or issue forth presume,
But close attend the labours of the loom.

Her prompt obedience on his order waits ;

Clos'd in an instant were the palace-gates.

420

In the same moment forth Philæti^{us} flies,

Secures the court, and with a cable ties

The utmost gate (the cable strongly wrought

Of Byblos' reed, a ship from Ægypt brought) ;

Then unperceiv'd and silent as the board

425

His seat he takes, his eyes upon his lord.

And now his well-known bow the master bore,

Turn'd on all sides, and view'd it o'er and o'er :

Left time or worms had done the weapon wrong,

Its owner absent and untry'd so long.

430

While some deriding—How he turns the bow !

Some other like it sure the man must know,

Or else would copy ; or in bows he deals ;

Perhaps he makes them, or perhaps he steals —

Heaven to this wretch (another cry'd) be kind !

And bless, in all to which he stands inclin'd,

With such good fortune as he now shall find.

Heedless he heard them ; but disdain'd reply ;

The bow perusing with exactest eye.

Then, as some heavenly minstrel, taught to sing

440

High notes responsive to the trembling string,

To some new strain when he adapts the lyre,

Or the dumb lute refits with vocal wire,

Relaxes, strains, and draws them to and fro ;

So the great master drew the mighty bow :

445

And drew with ease. One hand aloft display'd

The bending horns, and one the string essay'd.

From his essaying hand the string let fly
 Twang'd short and sharp, like the shrill swallow's cry.
 A general horror ran through all the race,
 Sunk was each heart, and pale was every face.
 Signs from above ensued: th' unfolding sky
 In lightning burst: Jove thunder'd from on high.
 Fir'd at the call of Heaven's Almighty Lord,
 He snatch'd the shaft that glitter'd on the board:
 (Fast by the rest lay sleeping in the sheath,
 But soon to fly the messengers of death).

Now sitting as he was, the cord he drew,
 Through every ringlet leveling his view;
 Then notch'd the shaft, releas'd, and gave it wing;
 The whizzing arrow vanish'd from the string,
 Sung on direct, and threaded every ring.
 The solid gate its fury scarcely bounds;
 Pierc'd through and through, the solid gate resounds.

Then to the prince: Nor have I wrought thee shame;
 Nor err'd this hand unfaithful to its aim;
 Nor prov'd the toil too hard; nor have I lost
 That ancient vigour, once my pride and boast.
 Ill I deserv'd these haughty peers' disdain;
 Now let them comfort their dejected train,
 In sweet repast the present hour employ,
 Nor wait till evening for the genial joy:
 Then to the lute's soft voice prolong the night;
 Musick, the banquet's most refin'd delight.

He said, then gave a nod; and at the word
 Telemachus girds on his shining sword.
 Fast by his father's side he takes his stand:
 The beamy javelin lightens in his hand.

THE ODYSSEY

A R G U M E N T.

THE

THE DEATH OF THE SUITORS.

TWENTY-SECOND BOOK

OF THE ODYSSEY.

ARGUMENT.

THE DEATH OF THE SUITORS.

ULYSSES begins the slaughter of the suitors by the death of Antinous. He declares himself, and lets fly his arrows at the rest. Telemachus assists, and brings arms for his father, himself, Eumæus, and Philætius. Melanthius does the same for the wooers. Minerva encourages Ulysses in the shape of Mentor. The suitors are all slain, only Medon and Pheuius are spared. Melanthius and the unfaithful servants are executed. The rest acknowledge their master with all demonstrations of joy.

THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXII.

THEN fierce the hero o'er the threshold strode;
 Strip'd of his rags, he blaz'd out like a God,
 Full in their face the lifted bow he bore,
 And quiver'd deaths, a formidable store:
 Before his feet the rattling shower he threw, 5
 And thus, terrific, to the suitor crew:

One venturous game this hand has won to-day,
 Another, princes! yet remains to play;
 Another mark our arrow must attain.
 Phœbus, assist! nor be the labour vain. 10
 Swift as the word the parting arrow sings,
 And bears thy fate, Antinous, on its wings:
 Wretch that he was, of unprophetic soul!
 High in his hands he rear'd the golden bowl!
 Ev'n then to drain it lengthen'd out his breath; 15
 Chang'd to the deep, the bitter draught of death:
 For Fate who fear'd amidst a feastful band?
 And Fate to numbers, by a single hand?
 Full through his throat Ulysses' weapon pass'd,
 And pierc'd the neck. He falls, and breathes his last.
 The tumbling goblet the wide floor o'erflows,
 A stream of gore burst spouting from his nose;

Grim in convulsive agonies he sprawls :
 Before him spurn'd the loaded table falls,
 And spreads the pavement with a mingled flood 25
 Of floating meats, and wine, and human blood.
 Amaz'd, confounded, as they saw him fall,
 Uprose the throngs tumultuous round the hall;
 O'er all the dome they cast a haggard eye,
 Each look'd for arms : in vain ; no arms were nigh :
 Aim'ft thou at princes ? (all amaz'd they said)
 Thy last of games unhappy hast thou play'd ;
 Thy erring shaft has made our bravest bleed,
 And death, unlucky guest, attends thy deed.
 Vultures shall tear thee—Thus incens'd they spoke,
 While each to chance ascrib'd the wondrous stroke,
 Blind as they were ; for death ev'n now invades
 His destin'd prey, and wraps them all in shades.
 Then, grimly frowning with a dreadful look,
 That wither'd all their hearts, Ulysses spoke : 40
 Dogs, ye have had your day ; ye fear'd no more
 Ulysses vengeful from the Trojan shore ;
 While, to your lust and spoil a guardless prey,
 Our house, our wealth, our helpless handmaids lay :
 Not so content, with bolder frenzy fir'd, 45
 Ev'n to our bed presumptuous you aspir'd ;
 Laws or divine or human fail'd to move,
 Or shame of men, or dread of Gods above :
 Heedless alike of infamy or praise,
 Or Fame's eternal voice in future days : 50
 The hour of vengeance, wretches, now is come,
 Impending fate is yours, and instant doom.

Thus

Thus dreadful he, Confus'd the suitors stood,
From their pale cheeks recedes the flying blood;
Trembling they sought their guilty heads to hide, 55
Alone the bold Eurymachus reply'd:

If, as thy words impart, (he thus began)
Ulysses lives, and thou the mighty man,
Great are thy wrongs, and much hast thou sustain'd
In thy spoil'd palace, and exhausted land; 60
The cause and author of those guilty deeds,
Lo! at thy feet unjust Antinous bleeds.

Not love, but wild ambition was his guide;
To slay thy son, thy kingdoms to divide,
These were his aims; but juster Jove deny'd. 65

Since cold in death th' offender lies: oh, spare
Thy suppliant people, and receive their prayer!
Brass, gold, and treasures, shall the spoil defray,
Two hundred oxen every prince shall pay: 70
The waste of years refunded in a day.
Till then thy wrath is just—Ulysses burn'd
With high disdain, and sternly thus return'd:

All, all the treasures that enrich'd our throne
Before your rapines, join'd with all your own,
If offer'd, vainly should for mercy call; 75
'Tis you that offer, and I scorn them all;
Your blood is my demand, your lives the prize,
Till pale as yonder wretch each suitor lies.
Hence with those coward terms; or fight or fly;
This choice is left you, to resist or die; 80
And die I trust ye shall.—He sternly spoke:
With guilty fears the pale assembly shook.

Alone Eurymachus exhorts the train :
 Yon archer, comrades, will not shoot in vain ;
 But from the threshold shall his darts be sped, 85
 (Whoe'er he be) till every prince lie dead ?
 Be mindful of yourselves, draw forth your swords,
 And to his shafts obtend these ample boards
 (So need compels). Then all united strive
 The bold invader from his post to drive ; 90
 The city rouz'd shall to our rescue haste,
 And this mad archer soon have shot his last.

Swift as he spoke, he drew his traitor sword,
 And like a lion rush'd against his lord :
 The wary chief the rushing foe repress'd, 95
 Who met the point, and forc'd it in his breast :
 His falling hand deserts the lifted sword,
 And prone he falls extended o'er the board :
 Before him wide, in mix'd effusion, roll
 Th' untasted viands, and the jovial bowl. 100
 Full through his liver pass'd the mortal wound,
 With dying rage his forehead beats the ground,
 He spurn'd the seat with fury as he fell,
 And the fierce soul to darkness div'd, and hell.
 Next bold Amphinomus his arm extends 105
 To force the pass ; the God-like man defends.
 Thy spear, Telemachus ! prevents th' attack,
 The brazen weapon driving through his back,
 Thence through his breast its bloody passage tore ;
 Flat falls he thundering on the marble floor,
 And his crush'd forehead marks the stone with gore. }
 He left his javelin in the dead, for fear
 The long incumbrance of the weighty spear

To the fierce foe advantage might afford,
 To rush between and use the shorten'd sword. 115
 With speedy ardour to his fire he flies,
 And, arm, great father! arm (in haste he cries.)
 Lo! hence I run for other arms to wield,
 For missile javelins, and for helm and shield;
 Fast by our side let either faithful swain 120
 In arms attend us, and their part sustain.

Haste and return (Ulysses made reply)
 While yet th' auxiliar shafts this hand supply;
 Left thus alone, encounter'd by an host,
 Driv'n from the gate, th' important pass be lost. 125

With speed Telemachus obeys, and flies
 Where pil'd on heaps the royal armour lies;
 Four brazen helmets, eight refulgent spears,
 And four broad bucklers, to his fire he bears:
 At once in brazen panoply they shone, 130
 At once each servant brac'd his armour on;
 Around their king a faithful guard they stand,
 While yet each shaft flew deathful from his hand:
 Chief after chief expir'd at every wound,
 And swell'd the bleeding mountain on the ground.
 Soon as his store of flying fates was spent,
 Against the wall he set the bow unbent:
 And now his shoulders bear the massy shield,
 And now his hands two beamy javelins wield:
 He frowns beneath his nodding plume, that play'd 140
 O'er the high crest, and cast a dreadful shade.

There stood a window near, whence looking down
 From o'er the porch appear'd the subject town.

A double

A double strength of valves secur'd the place,
 A high and narrow, but the only pass: 145
 The cautious king, with all-preventing care,
 To guard that outlet, plac'd Eumæus there;
 When Agelaüs thus: Has none the sense
 To mount yon window, and alarm from thence
 The neighbour-town? The town shall force the door,
 And this bold archer soon shall shoot no more.

Melanthius then: That outlet to the gate
 So near adjoins, that one may guard the frait,
 But other methods of defence remain,
 Myself with arms can furnish all the train: 155
 Stores from the royal magazine I bring,
 And their own darts shall pierce the prince and king.

He said; and, mounting up the lofty stairs,
 Twelve shields, twelve lances, and twelve helmets bears:
 All arm, and sudden round the hall appears 160
 A blaze of bucklers, and a wood of spears.

The hero stands oppress'd with mighty woe,
 On every side he sees the labour grow:
 Oh curst event! and, oh! unlook'd for aid!
 Melanthius, or the women have betray'd— 165
 Oh, my dear son!—the father with a sigh!
 Then ceas'd; the filial virtue made reply:

Falsehood is folly, and 'tis just to own
 The fault committed; this was mine alone;
 My haste neglected yonder door to bar, 170
 And hence the villain has supply'd their war.
 Run, good Eumæus, then, and (what before
 I thoughtless err'd in) well secure that door:

Learn

Learn, if by female fraud this deed were done,
Or (as my thought misgives) by Dolus' son. 175

While yet they spoke, in quest of arms again
To the high chamber stole the faithless swain,
Not unobserv'd. Eumæus watchful ey'd,
And thus address'd Ulysses near his side:

The miscreant we suspected takes that way; 180
Him, if this arm be powerful, shall I slay?
Or drive him hither, to receive the meed
From thy own hand, of this detested deed?

Not so (reply'd Ulysses) leave him there,
For us sufficient is another care: 185

Within the structure of this palace wall
To keep inclos'd his masters till they fall,
Go you, and seize the felon; backward bind
His arms and legs, and fix a plank behind;
On this his body by strong cords extend,
And on a column near the roof suspend: }
So study'd tortures his vile days shall end.

The ready fwains obey'd with joyful haste,
Behind the felon unperceiv'd they pass'd,
As round the room in quest of arms he goes 195
(The half-shut door conceal'd his lurking foes):

One hand sustain'd a helm, and one the shield
Which old Laertes wont in youth to wield,
Cover'd with dust, with dryness chapt and worn,
The brass corroded, and the leather torn: 200

Thus laden, o'er the threshold as he stepp'd,
Fierce on the villain from each side they leap'd,
Back by the hair the trembling dastard drew,
And down reluctant on the pavement threw.

Active and pleas'd the zealous swains fulfil 201

At every point their master's rigid will :

First, fast behind, his hands and feet they bound,

Then streighten'd cords involv'd his body round :

So drawn aloft, athwart the column ty'd,

The howling felon swung from side to side. 205

Eumæus scoffing then with keen disdain :

There pass thy pleasing night, O gentle swain !

On that soft pillow, from that env'y'd height

First may'st thou see the springing dawn of light ;

So timely rise, when morning streaks the east, 215

To drive thy victims to the suitors' feast.

This said, they left him, tortur'd as he lay,

Secur'd the door, and hasty strode away :

Each, breathing death, resum'd his dangerous post

Near great Ulysses ; four against an host. 220

When, lo ! descending to her hero's aid

Jove's daughter Pallas, War's triumphant Maid :

In Mentor's friendly form she join'd his side ;

Ulysses saw, and thus with transport cry'd :

Come, ever welcome, and thy succour lend : 225

Oh, every sacred name in one ! my friend !

Early we lov'd, and long our loves have grown :

Whate'er through life's whole series I have done

Or good, or grateful, now to mind recall,

And, aiding this one hour, repay it all. 230

Thus he ; but pleasing hopes his bosom warm

Of Pallas latent in the friendly form.

The adverse host the phantom warrior ey'd,

And first, loud threatening, Agelaüs cry'd :

Mentor,

Mentor, beware ! nor let that tongue persuade
Thy frantic arm to lend Ulysses aid ;
Our force successful shall our threat make good,
And with the fire and son's commix thy blood.
What hop'st thou here ? Thee first the sword shall slay,
Then lop thy whole posterity away ;
Far hence thy banish'd consort shall we send ;
With his, thy forfeit lands and treasures blend ;
Thus, and thus only, shalt thou join thy friend.

His barbarous insult ev'n the Goddess fires,
Who thus the warrior to revenge inspires :

Art thou Ulysses ? where then shall we find
The patient body and the constant mind ?
That courage, once the Trojans daily dread,
Known nine long years, and felt by heroes dead ?
And where that conduct, which reveng'd the lust
Of Priam's race, and laid proud Troy in dust ?
If this, when Helen was the cause, were done ;
What for thy country now, thy queen, thy son ?
Rise then in combat, at my side attend ;
Observe what vigour gratitude can lend,
And foes how weak, oppos'd against a friend !

She spoke ; but, willing longer to survey
The fire and son's great acts, withheld the day ;
By farther toils decreed the brave to try,
And level pois'd the wings of victory :
Then with a change of form eludes their sight,
Perch'd like a swallow on a rafter's height,
And unperceiv'd enjoys the rising fight.

Damasto's

Damasto's son, bold Agelaus, leads
 The guilty war; Eurynomus succeeds; 265
 With these, Pisander, great Polyctor's son,
 Sage Polybus, and stern Amphimedon,
 With Demoptolemus: these six survive;
 The best of all, the shafts had left alive.
 Amidst the carnage desperate as they stand, 270
 Thus Agelaus rous'd the lagging band:

The hour is come, when yon fierce man no more
 With bleeding princes shall bestrow the floor.
 Lo! Mentor leaves him with an empty boast;
 The four remain, but four against an host. 275
 Let each at once discharge the deadly dart,
 One sure of six shall reach Ulysses' heart:
 The rest must perish, their great leader slain;
 Thus shall one stroke the glory lost regain.

Then all at once their mingled lances threw, 280
 And thirsty all of one man's blood they flew;
 In vain! Minerva turn'd them with her breath,
 And scatter'd short, or wide, the points of death;
 With deaden'd sound, one on the threshold falls,
 One strikes the gate, one rings against the walls: 285
 The storm pass'd innocent. The god-like man
 Now loftier trod, and dreadful thus began:
 'Tis now (brave friends) our turn, at once to throw
 (So speed them Heaven) our javelins at the foe.
 That impious race to all their pass'd misdeeds 290
 Would add our blood. Injustice still proceeds.
 He spoke: at once their fiery lances flew;

Great Demoptolemus Ulysses slew;

Euryades

Euryades receiv'd the prince's dart;
 The goatherd's quiver'd in Pifander's heart; 295
 Fierce Elatus by thine, Eumæus, falls;
 Their fall in thunder echoes round the walls.
 The rest retreat: the victors now advance,
 Each from the dead resumes his bloody lance.
 Again the foe discharge the steelly shower; 300
 Again made frustrate by the Virgin-power.
 Some, turn'd by Pallas, on the threshold fall;
 Some wound the gate, some ring against the wall;
 Some weak, or ponderous with the brazen head,
 Drop harmless on the pavement sounding dead. 305
 Then bold Amphimedon his javelin cast;
 Thy hand, Telemachus, it lightly raz'd:
 And from Ctesippus' arm the spear elanc'd
 On good Eumæus' shield and shoulder glanc'd:
 Not lessen'd of their force (so slight the wound) 310
 Each sung along, and dropp'd upon the ground.
 Fate doom'd thee next, Eurydamus, to bear
 Thy death, ennobled by Ulysses' spear.
 By the bold son Amphimedon was slain:
 And Polybus renown'd the faithful swain. 315
 Pierc'd through the breast the rude Ctesippus bled,
 And thus Philæus gloried o'er the dead.
 There end thy pompous vaunts and high disdain;
 Oh! sharp in scandal, voluble, and vain!
 How weak is mortal pride! To Heaven alone 320
 Th' event of actions and our fates are known:
 Scoffer, behold what gratitude we bear:
 The victim's heel is answer'd with this spear.

Ulysses

Ulysses brandish'd high his vengeful steel,
 And Damastorides that instant fell; 325
 Fast-by Leocritus expiring lay,
 The prince's javelin tore its bloody way
 Through all his bowels: down he tumbles prone,
 His batter'd front and brains besmear the stone.

Now Pallas shines confest'd! aloft she spreads 330
 The arm of vengeance o'er their guilty heads;
 The dreadful ægis blazes in their eye;
 Amaz'd they see, they tremble, and they fly:
 Confus'd, distracted, through the rooms they fling,
 Like oxen madden'd by the breeze's sting,
 When sultry days, and long, succeed the gentle
 spring.

Not half so keen fierce vultures of the chase
 Stoop from the mountains on the feather'd race,
 When, the wide field extended snares beset,
 With conscious dread they shun the quivering net:
 No help, no flight: but, wounded every way,
 Headlong they drop: the fowlers seize the prey.
 On all sides thus they double wound on wound,
 In prostrate heaps the wretches beat the ground,
 Unmanly shrieks precede each dying groan, 345
 And a red deluge floats the reeking stone.

Leiodes first before the victor falls;
 The wretched augur thus for mercy calls:
 Oh gracious hear! nor let thy suppliant bleed:
 Still undishonour'd, or by word or deed, 350
 Thy house, for me, remains; by me repress'd
 Full oft was check'd th' injustice of the rest:

Averse

Averse they heard me when I counsel'd well,
 Their hearts were harden'd, and they justly fell.
 Oh! spare an augur's consecrated head, 355
 Nor add the blameless to the guilty dead!

Priest as thou art! for that detested band
 Thy lying prophecies deceiv'd the land:
 Against Ulysses have thy vows been made,
 For them, thy daily orisons were paid: 360
 Yet more, ev'n to our bed thy pride aspires:
 One common crime one common fate requires.

Thus speaking, from the ground the sword he took
 Which Agelaüs' dying hand forsook;
 Full through his neck the weighty faulchion sped: 365
 Along the pavement roll'd the muttering head.

Phemius alone the hand of vengeance spar'd,
 Phemius the sweet, the Heaven-instructed bard.
 Beside the gate the reverend minstrel stands;
 The lyre, now silent, trembling in his hands; 370
 Dubious to supplicate the chief, or fly
 To Jove's inviolable altar nigh,
 Where oft Laërtes holy vows had paid,
 And oft Ulysses smoking victims laid.
 His honour'd harp with care he first set down, 375
 Between the laver and the silver throne;
 Then prostrate stretch'd before the dreadful man,
 Persuasive, thus with accent soft began:

O king! to mercy be thy soul inclin'd,
 And spare the poet's ever-gentle kind. 380
 A deed like this thy future fame would wrong;
 For dear to Gods and men is sacred song.

Self-taught I sing; by Heaven, and Heaven alone,
 The genuine seeds of poesy are sown;
 And (what the Gods bestow) the lofty lay, 385
 The Gods alone, and god-like worth, we pay.
 Save then the poet, and thyself reward;
 'Tis thine to merit, mine is to record.

That here I sung, was force, and not desire;
 This hand reluctant touch'd the warbling wire; 390
 And let thy son attest, nor sordid pay,
 Nor servile flattery, stain'd the moral lay.

The moving words Telemachus attends,
 His fire approaches, and the bard defends.

Oh! mix not, Father, with those impious dead 395
 The man divine; forbear that sacred head!
 Medon, the herald, too our arms may spare,
 Medon, who made my infancy his care;
 If yet he breathes, permit thy son to give
 Thus much to gratitude, and bid him live. 400

Beneath a table, trembling with dismay,
 Couch'd close to earth, unhappy Medon lay,
 Wrapp'd in a new-slain ox's ample hide:
 Swift at the word he cast his screen aside,
 Sprung to the prince, embrac'd his knee with tears,
 And thus with grateful voice address'd his ears:

O prince! O friend! lo! here thy Medon stands;
 Ah! stop the hero's unresisted hands,
 Incens'd too justly by that impious brood
 Whose guilty glories now are set in blood. 410

To whom Ulysses with a pleasing eye:
 Be bold, on friendship and my son rely;

Live,

Live an example for the world to read,
How much more safe the good than evil deed:
Thou, with the Heaven-taught Bard, in peace resort
From blood and carnage to yon open court:
Me other work requires—With timorous awe
From the dire scene th' exempted two withdraw,
Scarce sure of life, look round, and trembling move
To the bright altars of Protector Jove. 420

Meanwhile Ulysses search'd the dome, to find
If yet there live of all th' offending kind.
Not one! compleat the bloody tale he found,
All steep'd in blood, all gasping on the ground.
So when, by hollow shores, the fisher train
Sweep with their arching nets the hoary main,
And scarce the meshy toils the copious draught
contain, }

All naked of their element, and bare,
The fishes pant and gasp in thinner air;
Wide o'er the sands are spread the stiffening prey,
Till the warm sun exhales their soul away.

And now the king commands his son to call
Old Euryclea to the deathful hall:
The son observant not a moment stays:
The aged governess with speed obeys: 435
The sounding portals instant they display;
The matron moves, the prince directs the way.
On heaps of death the stern Ulysses flood,
All black with dust, and cover'd thick with blood.
So the grim lion from the slaughter comes, 440
Dreadful he glares, and terribly he roams,

His breast with marks of carnage painted o'er,
His jaws all dropping with the bull's black gore.

Soon as her eyes the welcome object met,
The guilty fall'n, the mighty deed compleat; 445
A scream of joy her feeble voice essay'd:
The hero check'd her, and compos'dly said—

Woman, experienc'd as thou art, control
Indecent joy, and feast thy secret soul.
T' insult the dead, is cruel and unjust; 450
Fate and their crime have sunk them to the dust.
Nor heeded these the censure of mankind;
The good and bad were equal in their mind.
Justly the price of worthlessness they paid,
And each now wails an unlamented shade. 455
But thou, sincere, O Euryclea! say
What maids dishonour us, and what obey?

Then she: In these thy kingly walls remain
(My son) full fifty of the handmaid train,
Taught by my care to cull the fleece, or weave, 460
And servitude with pleasing tasks deceive;
Of these, twice six pursue their wicked way,
Nor me, nor chaste Penelope obey;
Nor fits it that Telemachus command
(Young as he is) his mother's female band. 465
Hence to the upper chambers let me fly,
Where slumbers soft now close the royal eye;
There wake her with the news—the matron cry'd.
Not so, (Ulysses more sedate reply'd)
Bring first the crew who wrought these guilty deeds:
In haste the matron parts; the king proceeds:

Now

Now to dispose the dead, the care remains
 To you, my son, and you, my faithful swains;
 Th' offending females to that task we doom,
 To wash, to scent, and purify the room. 475
 These (every table cleans'd, and every throne,
 And all the melancholy labour done)
 Drive to yon court, without the palace-wall,
 There the revenging sword shall smite them all;
 So with the suitors let them mix in dust, 480
 Stretch'd in a long oblivion of their lust.

He said: the lamentable train appear,
 Each vents a groan, and drops a tender tear;
 Each heav'd her mournful burthen, and beneath
 The porch, depos'd the ghastly heaps of death. 485
 The chief severe, compelling each to move,
 Urg'd the dire task imperious from above.
 With thirsty sponge they rub the tables o'er,
 (The swains unite their toil) the walls, the floor,
 Wash'd with th' effusive wave, are purg'd of gore. }
 Once more the palace set in fair array,
 To the base court the females take their way;
 There compass'd close between the dome and wall,
 (Their life's last scene) they trembling wait their fall.

Then thus the prince: To these shall we afford
 A fate so pure as by the martial sword?
 To these, the nightly prostitutes to shame,
 And base revilers of our house and name?

Thus speaking, on the circling wall he strung
 A ship's tough cable, from a column hung; 500

Near the high top he strain'd it strongly round,
 Whence no contending foot could reach the ground.
 Their heads above connected in a row,
 They beat the air with quivering feet below :
 Thus, on some tree hung struggling in the snare, 505
 The doves or thrushes flap their wings in air.
 Soon fled the soul impure, and left behind
 The empty corse to waver with the wind.

Then forth they led Melanthius, and began
 Their bloody work : they lopp'd away the man, 510
 Morsel for dogs ! then trimm'd with brazen sheers
 The wretch, and shorten'd of his nose and ears ;
 His hands and feet last felt the cruel steel :

He roar'd, and torments gave his soul to hell—
 They wash, and to Ulysses take their way ; 515
 So ends the bloody business of the day.

To Euryclea then address'd the king :
 Bring hither fire, and hither sulphur bring,
 To purge the palace : then, the queen attend,
 And let her with her matron-train descend ; 520
 The matron-train, with all the virgin-band,
 Assemble here to learn their lord's command.

Then Euryclea : Joyful I obey,
 But cast those mean dishonest rags away ;
 Permit me first the royal robes to bring : 525
 Ill suits this garb the shoulders of a king.

" Bring sulphur straight, and fire," (the monarch cries)
 She hears, and at the word obedient flies.

With fire and sulphur, cure of noxious fumes,
 He purg'd the walls, and blood-polluted rooms. 530

Again

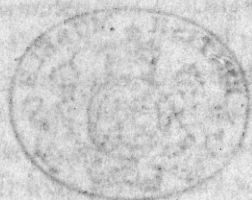
Again the matron springs with eager pace, ||
 And spreads her lord's return from place to place.
 They hear, rush forth, and instant round him stand
 A gazing throng, a torch in every hand.
 They saw, they knew him, and with fond embrace
 Each humbly kifs'd his knee, or hand, or face;
 He knows them all; in all such truth appears,
 Ev'n he indulges the sweet joy of tears.

Again the nation throng with eager pace,
And forward for his return from place to place.
They hear, and lo! and instant round him stand
A group throng, a torch in every hand.
They say, they know him, and the first embraces
Each hands, and "the king, or king, or king"
He knows, and all in all that word is said,
Now he is home, the lucky boy of home.

4 AP 54

A R G U M E N T

**THE
TWENTY-THIRD BOOK
OF THE
ODYSSEY.**



A R G U M E N T.

EURYCLEA awakens Penelope with the news of Ulysses's return, and the death of the suitors. Penelope scarcely credits her; but supposes some God has punished them, and descends from her apartment in doubt. At the first interview of Ulysses and Penelope, she is quite unsatisfied. Minerva restores him to the beauty of his youth; but the queen continues incredulous, till by some circumstances she is convinced, and falls into all the transports of passion and tenderness. They recount to each other all that has past during their long separation. The next morning Ulysses, arming himself and his friends, goes from the city to visit his father.



THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIII.

THEN to the queen, as in repose she lay,
 The nurse with eager rapture speeds her way;
 The transports of her faithful heart supply
 A sudden youth, and give her wings to fly.

And sleeps my child? the reverend matron cries: 5
 Ulysses lives! arise, my child, arise!
 At length appears the long-expected hour!
 Ulysses comes! the suitors are no more!
 No more they view the golden light of day! 10
 Arise, and bless thee with the glad survey!

Touch'd at her words, the mournful queen rejoin'd,
 Ah! whither wanders thy distemper'd mind?
 The righteous Powers, who tread the starry skies,
 The weak enlighten, and confound the wise,
 And human thought with unresisted sway, 15
 Depress or raise, enlarge or take away:
 Truth, by their high decree, thy voice forsakes,
 And Folly, with the tongue of Wisdom, speaks:
 Unkind, the fond illusion to impose!
 Was it to flatter or deride my woes? 20
 Never did I a sleep so sweet enjoy,
 Since my dear lord left Ithaca for Troy,

Why, must I wake to grieve; and curse thy shore,
 O Troy?—may never tongue pronounce thee more!
 Be gone: another might have felt our rage, 25
 But age is sacred, and we spare thy age.

To whom with warmth: My soul a lie disdains;
 Ulysses lives, thy own Ulysses reigns:
 That stranger, patient of the suitors' wrongs,
 And the rude licence of ungovern'd tongues, 30
 He, he is thine. Thy son his latent guest
 Long knew; but lock'd the secret in his breast;
 With well-concerted art to end his woes,
 And burst at once in vengeance on the foes.

While yet she spoke, the queen in transport sprung
 Swift from the couch, and round the matron hung;
 Fast from her eye descends the rolling tear,
 Say, once more say, is my Ulysses here?
 How could that numerous and outrageous band
 By one be slain, though by an hero's hand? 40

I saw it not, she cries, but heard alone,
 When death was busy, a loud dying groan;
 The damsel-train turn'd pale at every wound,
 Immur'd we sate, and catch'd each passing sound;
 When death had seiz'd her prey, thy son attends, 45
 And at his nod the damsel-train descends;
 There terrible in arms Ulysses stood,
 And the dead suitors almost swam in blood;
 Thy heart had leap'd, the hero to survey,
 Stern as the surly lion o'er his prey, 50
 Glorious in gore now with sulphureous fires
 The dome he purges, now the flame aspires:

Heap'd

Heap'd lie the dead without the palace walls,
Haste, daughter, haste, thy own Ulysses calls!
Thy every wish the bounteous Gods bestow,
Enjoy the present good, and former woe;
Ulysses lives, his vanquish'd foes to see;
He lives to thy Telemachus and thee!

Ah! no; with sighs Penelope rejoin'd,
Excess of joy disturbs thy wandering mind;
How bless'd this happy hour, should he appear,
Dear to us all, to me supremely dear!
Ah! no; some God the suitors' deaths decreed,
Some God defends, and by his hand they bleed;
Blind! to condemn the stranger's righteous cause,
And violate all hospitable laws!
The good they hated, and the Powers defy'd;
But Heaven is just, and by a God they dy'd.
For never must Ulysses view this shore;
Never! the lov'd Ulysses is no more!

What words (the matron cries) have reach'd my ears?
Doubt we his presence, when he now appears?
Then hear conviction: Ere the fatal day
That forc'd Ulysses o'er the watery way,
A boar fierce-rushing in the sylvan war,
Plough'd half his thigh; I saw, I saw the scar,
And wild with transport had reveal'd the wound;
But ere I spoke, he rose, and check'd the sound.
Then, daughter, haste away! and if a lie
Flow from this tongue, then let thy servant die!

To whom with dubious joy the queen replies:
Wife is thy soul, but errors seize the wife;

The works of Gods what mortal can survey?
 Who knows their motives? who shall trace their way?
 But learn we instant how the suitors trod 85
 The paths of death, by man, or by a God.

Thus speaks the queen, and no reply attends,
 But with alternate joy and fear descends;
 At every step debates her lord to prove!
 On, rushing to his arms, confesses her love! 90
 Then gliding through the marble valves, in state
 Oppos'd, before the shining fire she sate.
 The monarch, by a column high enthron'd,
 His eye withdrew, and fix'd it on the ground;
 Curious to hear his queen the silence-break, 95
 Amaz'd she sate, and impotent to speak;
 O'er all the man her eyes she rolls in vain,
 Now hopes, now fears, now knows, then doubts again.
 At length Telemachus—Oh! who can find
 A woman like Penelope unkind? 100
 Why thus in silence? why with winning charms
 Thus slow, to fly with rapture to his arms?
 Stubborn the breast that with no transport glows,
 When twice ten years are pass'd of mighty woes:
 To softness lost, to spousal love unknown, 105
 The Gods have form'd that rigid heart of stone!

O my Telemachus! the queen rejoin'd,
 Distracting fears confound my labouring mind;
 Powerless to speak, I scarce uplift my eyes,
 Nor dare to question; doubts on doubts arise. 110
 Oh! deign he, if Ulysses, to remove
 These boding thoughts, and what he is, to prove!

Pleas'd

Pleas'd with her virtuous fears, the king replies,
Indulge, my son, the cautions of the wife;
Time shall the truth to sure remembrance bring: 115
This garb of poverty belies the king;
No more.—This day our deepest care requires,
Cautious to act what thought mature inspires.
If one man's blood, though mean, distain our hands,
The homicide retreats to foreign lands; 120
By us, in heaps th' illustrious peerage falls,
Th' important deed our whole attention calls.

Be that thy care, Telemachus replies,
The world conspires to speak Ulysses wise;
For wisdom all is thine! lo, I obey, 125
And dauntless follow where you lead the way;
Nor shalt thou in the day of danger find
Thy coward son degenerate lag behind.

Then instant to the bath (the monarch cries)
Bid the gay youth and sprightly virgins rise, 130
Thence all descend in pomp and proud array,
And bid the dome resound the mirthful lay;
While the sweet lyrist airs of rapture sing,
And forms the dance responsive to the strings.
That hence th' eluded passengers may say, 135
Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!
The suitors' death unknown, till we remove
Far from the court, and act inspir'd by Jove.

Thus spoke the king: th' observant train obey,
At once they bathe, and dress in proud array: 140
The lyrist strikes the string; gay youths advance,
And fair-zon'd damsels form the sprightly dance.
The

The voice attun'd to instrumental sounds,
 Ascends the roof; the vaulted roof rebounds;
 Not unobserv'd: the Greeks eluded say
 Lo! the queen weds! we hear the spousal lay!
 Inconstant! to admit the bridal hour.
 Thus they—but nobly chaste she weds no more.

Meanwhile the weary'd king the bath ascends;
 With faithful cares Eurynomè attends,
 O'er every limb a shower of fragrance sheds;
 Then, dress'd in pomp, magnificent he treads.
 The Warriour-Goddes gives his frame to shine
 With majesty enlarg'd, and grace divine.
 Back from his brows in wavy ringlets fly
 His thick large locks of hyacinthine dye.
 As by some artist, to whom Vulcan gives
 His heavenly skill, a breathing image lives;
 By Pallas taught, he frames the wondrous mould,
 And the pale silver glows with fusile gold:
 So Pallas his heroic form improves
 With bloom divine, and like a God he moves;
 More high he treads, and issuing forth in state,
 Radiant before his gazing consort fate.
 And, O my queen! he cries, what power above
 Has steel'd that heart, averse to spousal love!
 Canst thou, Penelope, when Heaven restores
 Thy lost Ulysses to his native shores,
 Canst thou, oh cruel! unconcern'd survey
 Thy lost Ulysses, on this signal day?
 Haste, Euryclea, and dispatchful spread
 For me, and me alone, th' imperial bed:

My

My weary nature craves the balm of rest :

But Heaven with adamant has arm'd her breast.

Ah ! no ; she cries, a tender heart I bear, 175

A foe to pride ; no adamant is there ;

And now, ev'n now it melts ! for sure I see

Once more Ulysses, my belov'd, in thee !

Fix'd in my soul as when he sail'd to Troy,

His image dwells : then haste the bed of joy ! 180

Haste, from the bridal bower the bed translate,

Fram'd by his hand, and be it dress'd in state !

Thus speaks the queen, still dubious, with disguise ;

Touch'd at her words, the king with warmth replies :

Alas, for this ! what mortal strength can move 185

The enormous burthen, who but Heaven above ?

It mocks the weak attempts of human hands ;

But the whole earth must move, if Heaven commands.

Then hear sure evidence, while we display

Words seal'd with sacred truth, and truth obey : 190

This hand the wonder fram'd ; an olive spread

Full in the court its ever verdant head.

Vast as some mighty column's bulk, on high

The huge trunk rose, and heav'd into the sky ;

Around the tree I rais'd a nuptial bower, 195

And roof'd defensive of the storm and shower ;

The spacious valve, with art inwrought, conjoins ;

And the fair dome with polish'd marble shines.

I lopp'd the branchy head ; aloft in twain

Sever'd the bole, and smooth'd the shining grain ; 200

Then posts, capacious of the frame, I raise,

And bore it, regular, from space to space :

Athwart the frame, at equal distance, lie
 Thongs of tough hides, that boast a purple dye;
 Then, polishing the whole, the finish'd mould
 With silver shone, with elephant, and gold
 But if o'erturn'd by rude, ungovern'd hands,
 Or still inviolate the olive stands,
 'Tis thine, O Queen, to say: and now impart,
 If fears remain, or doubts distract thy heart

While yet he speaks, her powers of life decay,
 She sickens, trembles, falls, and faints away
 At length recovering, to his arms she flew,
 And strain'd him close, as to his breast she grew
 The tears pour'd down amain: and, Oh! she cries,
 Let not against thy spouse thine anger rise!
 Oh! vers'd in every turn of human art,
 Forgive the weakness of a woman's heart!
 The righteous Powers, that mortal lots dispose,
 Decree us to sustain a length of woes,
 And from the flower of life, the bliss deny
 To bloom together, fade away, and die.
 Oh! let me, let me not thine anger move,
 That I forbore, thus, thus to speak my love;
 Thus in fond kisses, while the transport warms,
 Pour out my soul, and die within thy arms!
 I dreaded fraud! Men, faithless men, betray
 Our easy faith, and make the sex their prey:
 Against the fondness of my heart I strove,
 'Twas caution, O my lord! not want of love:
 Like me had Helen fear'd, with wanton charms
 Ere the fair mischief set two worlds in arms;

Ere Greece rose dreadful in th' avenging day;
 Thus had the fear'd, she had not gone astray.
 But Heaven, averse to Greece, in wrath decreed 235
 That she should wander, and that Greece should bleed:
 Blind to the ills that from injustice flow,
 She colour'd all our wretched lives with woe.
 But why these sorrows when my lord arrives?
 I yield, I yield! my own Ulysses lives! 240
 The secrets of the bridal bed are known
 To thee, to me, to Actoris alone,
 (My father's present in the spousal hour,
 The sole attendant on our genial bower).
 Since what no eye has seen thy tongue reveal'd, 245
 Hard and distrustful as I am, I yield.

Touch'd to the soul, the king with rapture hears,
 Hangs round her neck, and speaks his joy in tears.
 As to the shipwreck'd mariner, the shores
 Delightful rise, when angry Neptune roars; 250
 Then, when the surge in thunder mounts the sky,
 And gulf'd in crouds at once the sailors die;
 If one more happy, while the tempest raves,
 Out-lives the tumult of conflicting waves,
 All pale, with ooze deform'd, he views the strand,
 And plunging forth with transport grasps the land:
 The ravish'd queen with equal rapture glows,
 Clasps her lov'd lord, and to his bosom grows.
 Nor had they ended till the morning ray:
 But Pallas backward held the rising day, 260
 The wheels of night retarding, to detain
 The gay Aurora in the wavy main:

Whose flaming steeds, emerging through the night,
Beam o'er the eastern hills with streaming light.

At length Ulysses with a sigh replies : 265

Yet Fate, yet cruel Fate, repose denies ;
A labour long, and hard, remains behind ;
By Heaven above, by Hell beneath enjoin'd :
For, to Tiresias through th' eternal gates
Of hell I trode, to learn my future fates. 270

But end we here—the night demands repose,
Be deck'd the couch ! and peace a while, my woes !

To whom the queen : Thy word we shall obey,
And deck the couch ; far hence be woes away ;
Since the just Gods, who tread the starry plains, 275
Restore thee safe, since my Ulysses reigns.
But what those perils Heaven decrees, impart ;
Knowledge may grieve, but fear distracts the heart.

To this the king : Ah ! why must I disclose
A dreadful story of approaching woes ? 280
Why in this hour of transport wound thy ears,
When thou must learn what I must speak with tears ?
Heaven, by the Theban ghost, thy spouse decrees,
Torn from thy arms, to sail a length of seas ;
From realm to realm a nation to explore 285
Who ne'er knew salt, or heard the billows roar,
Nor saw gay vessel stem the surgy plain,
A painted wonder, flying on the main ;
An oar my hand must bear ; a shepherd eyes
The unknown instrument with strange surprize, 290
And calls a corn-van : this upon the plain
I fix, and hail the monarch of the main ;

Then bathe his altars with the mingled gore
 Of victims vow'd, a ram, a bull, a boar:
 Thence swift re-failing to my native shores,
 Due victims flay to all th' æthereal Powers,
 Then Heaven decrees in peace to end my days,
 And steal myself from life by slow decays;
 Unknown to pain, in age resign my breath,
 When late stern Neptune points the shaft of death;
 To the dark grave retiring as to rest;
 My people blessing, by my people blest'd.

Such future scenes th' all-righteous Powers display
 By their dread * feer, and such my future day.
 To whom thus firm of soul: If ripe for death,
 And full of days, thou gently yield thy breath:
 While Heaven a kind release from ills foreshows;
 Triumph, thou happy victor of thy woes!

But Euryclea with dispatchful care,
 And sage Eurynomè, the couch prepare:
 Instant they bid the blazing torch display
 Around the dome an artificial day;
 Then to repose her steps the matron bends,
 And to the queen Eurynomè descends;
 A torch she bears, to light with guiding fires
 The royal pair; she guides them, and retires.
 Then instant his fair spouse Ulysses led,
 To the chaste love-rites of the nuptial bed.

And now the blooming youths and sprightly fair
 Cease the gay dance, and to their rest repair;
 But in discourse the king and consort lay,
 While the soft hours stole unperceiv'd away:

Q₃

Intent

* Tiresias.

Intent he hears Penelope disclose
 A mournful story of domestic woes,
 His servants insults, his invaded bed,
 How his whole flocks and herds exhausted bled,
 His generous wines dishonour'd shed in vain,
 And the wild riots of the suitor train.
 The king alternate a dire tale relates,
 Of wars, of triumphs, and disastrous fates;
 All he unfolds; his listening spouse turns pale
 With pleasing horror at the dreadful tale!
 Sleepless devours each word; and hears how slain
 Cicons on Cicons swell th' ensanguin'd plain;
 How, to the land of Lotè unblest'd he fails;
 And images the rills, and flowery vales;
 How, dash'd like dogs, his friends the Cyclops tore,
 (Not unreveng'd) and quaff'd the spouting gore;
 How, the loud storms in prison bound, he fails
 From friendly Æolus with prosperous gales;
 Yet Fate withstands! a sudden tempest roars,
 And whirls him groaning from his native shores;
 How, on the barbarous Læstrigonian coast,
 By savage hands his fleet and friends he lost;
 How scarce himself surviv'd: he paints the bower,
 The spells of Circe, and her magic power;
 His dreadful journey to the realms beneath,
 To seek Tiresias in the vales of death;
 How in the doleful mansions he survey'd
 His royal mother, pale Anticlea's shade;
 And friends in battle slain, heroic ghosts;
 Then how, unharm'd, he pass'd the Syren-coasts,

The

The jutting rocks where fierce Charybdis raves;
 And howling Scylla whirls her thunderous waves;
 The cave of death! How his companions slay
 The oxen sacred to the God of Day,
 Till Jove in wrath the rattling tempest guides,
 And whelms th' offenders in the roaring tides:
 How, struggling through the surge, he reach'd the shores
 Of fair Ogygia, and Calypso's bowers;
 Where the gay blooming nymph constrain'd his stay,
 With sweet reluctant amorous delay;
 And promis'd, vainly promis'd, to bestow
 Immortal life, exempt from age and woe:
 How, sav'd from storms, Phæacia's coasts he trod,
 By great Alcinous honour'd as a God,
 Who gave him last his country to behold,
 With change of raiment, brass, and heaps of gold.

He ended, sinking into sleep, and shares
 A sweet forgetfulness of all his cares. 370

Soon as soft slumber eas'd the toils of day,
 Minerva rushes through the æreal way,
 And bids Aurora, with her golden wheels,
 Flame from the ocean o'er the eastern hills:
 Uprose Ulysses from the genial bed, 375
 And thus with thought mature the monarch said:

My Queen, my Consort! through a length of years,
 We drank the cup of sorrow mix'd with tears,
 Thou, for thy lord: while me th' immortal Powers
 Detain'd reluctant from my native shores. 380
 Now, blest again by Heaven, the queen display,
 And rule our palace with an equal sway:

Be it my care, by loans, or martial toils,
 To throng my empty folds with gifts or spoils.
 But now I haste to bless Laertes' eyes, 385
 With sight of his Ulysses ere he dies;
 The good old man, to wasting woes a prey,
 Weeps a sad life in solitude away.
 But hear, though wise! This morning shall unfold
 The deathful scene; on heroes, heroes roll'd. 390
 Thou with thy maids within the palace stay,
 From all the scene of tumult far away!

He spoke, and sheath'd in arms incessant flies
 To wake his son, and bid his friends arise.
 To arms! aloud he cries; his friends obey,
 With glittering arms their manly limbs array, }
 And pass the city-gate; Ulysses leads the way. }
 Now flames the rosy dawn, but Pallas shrouds
 The latent warriors in a veil of clouds,

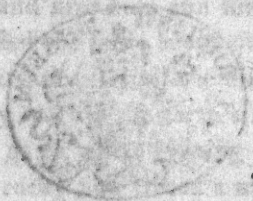
THE ODYSSEY

THE

TWENTY-FOURTH BOOK

OF THE

ODYSSEY.



ARGUMENT.

THE souls of the suitors are conducted by Mercury to the infernal shades. Ulysses in the country goes to the retirement of his father Laertes; he finds him busied in his garden all alone: the manner of his discovery to him is beautifully described. They return together to his lodge, and the king is acknowledged by Dolius and the servants. The Ithacensians, led by Eupithes, the father of Antinous, rise against Ulysses, who gives them battle, in which Eupithes is killed by Laertes: and the Goddess Pallas makes a lasting peace between Ulysses and his subjects, which concludes the Odysey.



THE ODYSSEY.

BOOK XXIV.

CYLLENIUS now to Pluto's dreary reign
 Conveys the dead, a lamentable train
 The golden wand, that causes sleep to fly,
 Or in soft slumber seals the wakeful eye,
 That drives the ghosts to realms of night or day;
 Points out the long uncomfortable way.
 Trembling the spectres glide, and plaintive vent
 Thin, hollow screams, along the deep descent.
 As in the cavern of some rifted den,
 Where flock nocturnal bats, and birds obscene;
 Cluster'd they hang, till at some sudden shock,
 They move, and murmurs run through all the rock;
 So cowering fled the sable heaps of ghosts,
 And such a scream fill'd all the dismal coasts.
 And now they reach'd the earth's remotest ends,
 And now the gates where evening Sol descends,
 And Leucas' rock, and Ocean's utmost streams,
 And now pervade the dusky land of Dreams,
 And rest at last, where souls unbodied dwell
 In ever-flowering meads of asphodel.
 The empty forms of men inhabit there,
 Impassive semblance, images of air!

Nought

Nought else are all that shin'd on earth before;
 Ajax and great Achilles are no more !
 Yet, still a master ghost, the rest he aw'd,
 The rest ador'd him, towering as he trod;
 Still at his side is Nestor's son survey'd,
 And lov'd Patroclus still attends his shade.

25

New as they were to that infernal shore,
 The suitors stopp'd, and gaz'd the hero o'er,
 When, moving slow, the regal form they view'd
 Of great Atrides ; him in pomp pursued
 And solemn sadness through the gloom of hell,
 The train of those who by Ægytus fell.

30

O mighty chief ! (Pelides thus began)
 Honour'd by Jove above the lot of man !
 King of a hundred kings ! to whom resign'd
 The strongest, bravest, greatest of mankind.
 Com'st thou the first to view this dreary state
 And was the noblest the first mark of Fate ?
 Condemn'd to pay the great arrear so soon,
 The lot, which all lament, and none can shun ;
 Oh ! better hadst thou sunk in Trojan ground,
 With all thy full-blown honours cover'd round !
 Then grateful Greece with streaming eyes might raise
 Historic marbles to record thy praise :
 Thy praise eternal on the faithful stone
 Had with transmissive glories grac'd thy son.
 But heavier fates were destin'd to attend :
 What man is happy, till he knows his end ?

35

40

50

O son of Pelus ! greater than mankind !
 (Thus Agamemnon's kingly shade rejoin'd)

Thrice

Thrice happy thou ! to press the martial plain
'Midst heaps of heroes in thy quarrel slain :
In clouds of smoke rais'd by the noble fray,
Great and terrific ev'n in death you lay,
And deluges of blood flow'd round you every way.
Nor ceas'd the strife, till Jove himself oppos'd,
And all in tempests the dire evening clos'd.
Then to the fleet we bore thy honour'd load, 60
And decent on the funeral bed bestow'd.
Then unguents sweet and tepid streams we shed ;
Tears flow'd from every eye, and o'er the dead
Each clipt the curling honours of his head.
Struck at the news thy azure Mother came ; 65
The sea-green Sisters waited on the dame :
A voice of loud lament through all the main
Was heard : and terror seiz'd the Grecian train :
Back to their ships the frightened host had fled ;
But Nestor spoke, they listen'd, and obey'd. 70
(From old experience Nestor's counsel springs,
And long vicissitudes of human things.)
" Forbear your flight : fair Thetis from the main,
" To mourn Achilles, leads her azure train."
Around thee stand the Daughters of the deep, 75
Robe thee in heavenly vests, and round thee weep,
Round thee, the Muses, with alternate strain,
In ever-consecrating verse, complain.
Each warlike Greek the moving music hears,
And iron-hearted heroes melt in tears. 80
Till seventeen nights and seventeen days return'd,
All that was mortal or immortal mourn'd.

To

To flames we gave thee, the succeeding day,
 And fatted sheep and fable oxen flay;
 With oils and honey blaze th' augmented fires, 85
 And, like a God adorn'd, thy earthly part expires.
 Unnumber'd warriors round the burning pile
 Urge the fleet courser's or the racer's toil;
 Thick clouds of dust o'er all the circle rise,
 And the mix'd clamour thunders in the skies. 90
 Soon as absorpt in all-embracing flame
 Sunk what was mortal of thy mighty name,
 We then collect thy snowy bones, and place
 With wines and unguents in a golden vase
 (The vase to Thetis Bacchus gave of old, 95
 And Vulcan's art enrich'd the sculptur'd gold.)
 There we thy relicks, great Achilles! blend
 With dear Patroclus, thy departed friend:
 In the same urn a separate space contains
 Thy next belov'd, Antilochus' remains. 100
 Now all the sons of warlike Greece surround
 Thy destin'd tomb, and cast a mighty mound:
 High on the shore the growing hill we raise,
 That wide th' extended Hellespont surveys;
 Where all, from age to age who pass the coast, 105
 May point Achilles' tomb, and hail the mighty ghost.
 Thetis herself to all our peers proclaims
 Heroic prizes and exequial games;
 The Gods assented; and around thee lay
 Rich spoils and gifts that blaz'd against the day. 110
 Oft have I seen, with solemn funeral games
 Heroes and kings committed to the flame;

But strength of youth, or valour of the brave,
 With nobler contest ne'er renown'd a grave.
 Such were the games by azure Thetis given, 115
 And such thy honours, O belov'd of Heaven!
 Dear to mankind thy fame survives, nor fades
 Its bloom eternal in the Stygian shades.
 But what to me avail my honours gone,
 Successful toils, and battles bravely won? 120
 Doom'd by stern Jove at home to end my life,
 By curst Ægistus, and a faithless wife!

Thus they; while Hermes o'er the dreary plain
 Led the sad numbers by Ulysses slain.
 On each majestic form they cast a view, 125
 And timorous pass'd, and awfully withdrew.
 But Agamemnon, through the gloomy shade,
 His ancient host Amphimedon survey'd;
 Son of Melanthius! (he began) oh say!
 What cause compell'd so many, and so gay,
 To tread the downward, melancholy way? }
 Say, could one city yield a troop so fair?
 Were all these partners of one native air?
 Or did the rage of stormy Neptune sweep
 Your lives at once, and whelm beneath the deep? 135
 Did nightly thieves, or pirates cruel bands,
 Drench with your blood your pillag'd country's sands?
 Or well-defending some beleagu'rd wall,
 Say, for the public did ye greatly fall?
 Inform thy guest; for such I was of yore 140
 When our triumphant navies touch'd your shore;
 Forc'd a long month the wintry seas to bear,
 To move the great Ulysses to the war.

O king

O king of men ! I faithful shall relate
 (Reply'd Amphimedon) our hapless fate.
 Ulysses absent, our ambitious aim
 With rival loves pursued his royal dame :
 Her coy reserve, and prudence mix'd with pride,
 Our common suit nor granted, nor deny'd ;
 But close with inward hate our deaths design'd ;
 Vers'd in all arts of wily womankind.
 Her hand, laborious, in delusion spread
 A spacious loom, and mix'd the various thread ;
 Ye peers (she cry'd) who press to gain my heart
 Where dead Ulysses claims no more a part,
 Yet a short space your rival suit suspend,
 Till this funereal web my labours end :
 Cease, till to good Laertes I bequeath
 A task of grief, his ornaments of death :
 Lest, when the Fates his royal ashes claim,
 The Grecian matrons taint my spotless fame ;
 Should he, long honour'd with supreme command,
 Want the last duties of a daughter's hand.

The fiction pleas'd : our generous train complies,
 Nor fraud mistrusts in virtue's fair disguise.
 The work she ply'd ; but, studious of delay,
 Each following night revers'd the toils of day.
 Unheard, unseen, three years her arts prevail ;
 The fourth, her maid reveal'd th' amazing tale,
 And show'd, as unperceiv'd we took our stand,
 The backward labours of her faithless hand.
 Forc'd, she compleats it ; and before us lay
 The mingled web, whose gold and silver ray
 Display'd the radiance of the night and day.

Just

Just as she finish'd her illustrious toil,
 Ill-fortune led Ulysses to our isle.
 Far in a lonely nook, beside the sea,
 At an old swineherd's rural lodge he lay:
 Thither his son from sandy Pyle repairs,
 And speedy lands, and secretly confers.
 They plan our future ruin, and resort
 Confederate to the city and the court.
 First came the son; the father next succeeds,
 Clad like a beggar, whom Eumæus leads;
 Propp'd on a staff, deform'd with age and care,
 And hung with rags that flutter'd in the air.
 Who could Ulysses in that form behold?
 Scorn'd by the young, forgotten by the old,
 Hush'd by all! to every wrong resign'd,
 Patient, he suffer'd with a constant mind.
 But when, arising in his wrath, to obey
 The will of Jove, he gave the vengeance way;
 The scatter'd arms that hung around the dome
 Careful he treasur'd in a private room:
 Then to her suitors bade his queen propose
 The archer's strife: the source of future woes,
 And omen of our death! In vain we drew
 The twanging string, and try'd the stubborn yew:
 To none it yields but great Ulysses' hands;
 In vain we threat; Telemachus commands:
 The bow he snatch'd, and in an instant bent;
 Through every ring the victor arrow went.
 Fierce on the threshold then in arms he stood;
 Pour'd forth the darts that thirsted for our blood,
 And frown'd before us, dreadful as a God!

First bleeds Antinous: thick the shafts resound;
 And heaps on heaps the wretches strow the ground;
 This way, and that, we turn, we fly, we fall;
 Some God assisted and unmann'd us all:
 Ignoble cries precede the dying groans;
 And batter'd brains and blood besmear the stones.

Thus, great Atrides, thus Ulysses drove
 The shades thou seest, from yon fair realms above.
 Our mangled bodies now deform'd with gore,
 Cold and neglected, spread the marble floor, 215
 No friend to bathe our wounds! or tears to shed
 O'er the pale corse! the honours of the dead.

Oh bless'd Ulysses (thus the king express'd
 His sudden rapture) in thy consort bless'd!
 Not more thy wisdom, than her virtue shin'd; 220
 Not more thy patience, than her constant mind.
 Icarus' daughter, glory of the past,
 And model to the future age shall last:
 The Gods, to honour her fair fame, shall raise
 (Their great reward) a poet in her praise. 225
 Not such, O Tyndarus, thy daughter's deed:
 By whose dire hand her king and husband bled:
 Her shall the Muse to infamy prolong,
 Example dread; and theme of tragic song!
 The general sex shall suffer in her shame, 230
 And ev'n the best that bears a woman's name.

Thus in the regions of eternal shade
 Conferr'd the mournful phantoms of the dead;
 While, from the town, Ulysses and his band
 Pass'd to Laërtes' cultivated land.

The

The ground himself had purchas'd with his pain,
And labour made the rugged soil a plain.
There stood his mansion of the rural sort,
With useful buildings round the lowly court:
Where the few servants that divide his care,
Took their laborious rest, and homely fare;
And one Sicilian matron, old and sage,
With constant duty tends his drooping age.

240

Here now arriving, to his rustic band
And martial son, Ulysses gave command:

245

Enter the house, and of the bristly swine
Select the largest to the powers divine.

Alone, and unattended, let me try

If yet I share the old man's memory:

If those dim eyes can yet Ulysses know

(Their light and dearest object long ago),

Now chang'd with time, with absence, and with woe?

Then to his train he gives his spear and shield;

The house they enter; and he seeks the field,

Through rows of shade with various fruitage crown'd,

And labour'd scenes of richest verdure round.

Nor aged Dolius, nor his sons were there,

Nor servants, absent on another care;

To search the woods for sets of flowery thorn,

Their orchard bounds to strengthen and adorn.

260

But all alone the hoary king he found;

His habit coarse, but warmly wrapt around;

His head, that bow'd with many a pensive care,

Fenc'd with a double cap of goatskin hair:

His buskins old, in former service torn,

265

But well repair'd; and gloves against the thorn.

In this array the kingly gardener stood,
 And clear'd a plant, encumber'd with its wood.
 Beneath a neighbouring tree the chief divine
 Gaz'd o'er his fire, retracing every line, 270
 The ruins of himself! now worn away
 With age, yet still majestic in decay!
 Sudden his eyes releas'd their watery store;
 The much-enduring man could bear no more.
 Doubtful he stood, if instant to embrace 275
 His aged limbs, to kiss his reverend face,
 With eager transport to disclose the whole,
 And pour at once the torrent of his soul.—
 Not so: his judgement takes the winding way
 Of question distant, and of soft essay: 280
 More gentle methods on weak age employs;
 And moves the sorrows, to enhance the joys.
 Then, to his fire with beating heart he moves;
 And with a tender pleasantry reproves:
 Who digging round the plant still hangs his head,
 Nor aught remits the work, while thus he said:
 Great is thy skill, O father, great thy toil,
 Thy careful hand is stamp'd on all the soil,
 Thy Squadron'd vineyards well thy art declare,
 The olive green, blue fig, and pendent pear;
 And not one empty spot escapes thy care.
 On every plant and tree thy cares are shown,
 Nothing neglected, but thyself alone.
 Forgive me, father, if this fault I blame;
 Age so advanc'd may some indulgence claim, 295
 Not for thy sloth, I deem thy lord unkind;
 Nor speaks thy form a mean or servile mind:

I read a monarch in that princely air,
 The same thy aspect, if the same thy care;
 Soft sleep, fair garments, and the joys of wine, 300
 These are the rights of age, and should be thine.
 Who then thy master, say? and whose the land
 So dress'd and manag'd by thy skilful hand?
 But chief, oh tell me! (what I question most)
 Is this the far-fam'd Ithacensian coast? 305
 For so reported the first man I view'd,
 (Some surly islander, of manners rude)
 Nor further conference vouchsaf'd to stay;
 Heedless he whistled, and pursued his way.
 But thou! whom years have taught to understand; 310
 Humanely hear, and answer my demand:
 A friend I seek, a wise one and a brave,
 Say, lives he yet, or moulders in the grave?
 Time was (my fortunes then were at the best)
 When at my house I lodg'd this foreign guest; 315
 He said, from Ithaca's fair isle he came,
 And old Laertes was his father's name.
 To him; whatever to a guest is ow'd
 I paid, and hospitable gifts bestow'd:
 To him seven talents of pure ore I told, 320
 Twelve cloaks, twelve vests, twelve tunicks stiff with
 gold;
 A bowl, that rich with polish'd silver flames,
 And, skill'd in female works, four lovely dames.
 At this the father, with a father's fears,
 (His venerable eyes bedimm'd with tears,) 325
 This is the land; but ah! thy gifts are lost,
 For godless men, and rude, possess the coast:

Sunk is the glory of this once-fam'd shore!
 Thy ancient friend, O stranger, is no more!
 Full recompense thy bounty else had borne;
 For every good man yields a just return:
 So civil rights demand; and who begins
 The track of friendship, not pursuing, sins.
 But tell me, stranger, be the truth confess'd,
 What years have circled since thou saw'st that guest?
 That hapless guest, alas! for ever gone!
 Wretch that he was! and that I am! my son
 If ever man to misery was born,
 'Twas his to suffer, and 'tis mine to mourn!
 Far from his friends, and from his native reign,
 He lies a prey to monsters of the main,
 Or savage beasts his mangled reliques tear,
 Or screaming vultures scatter through the air:
 Nor could his mother funeral unguents shed;
 Nor wail'd his father o'er th' untimely dead:
 Nor his sad consort, on the mournful bier,
 Seal'd his cold eyes, or drop'd a tender tear!
 But tell me, who thou art? and what thy race?
 Thy town, thy parents, and thy native place?
 Or, if a merchant in pursuit of gain,
 What port receiv'd thy vessel from the main?
 Or com'st thou single, or attend thy train?
 Then thus the son: From Alybas I came,
 My palace there; Eperitus my name.
 Not vulgar born; from Aphidas, the king
 Of Polypemon's royal line, I spring.
 Some adverse Dæmon from Sicania bore
 Our wandering course, and drove us on your shore:

Far

Far from the town, an unfrequented bay
Reliev'd our weary'd vessel from the sea. 360
Five years have circled since these eyes pursued
Ulysses parting through the sable flood;
Prosperous he sail'd, with dexter auguries,
And all the wing'd good omens of the skies.
Well hop'd we, then, to meet on this fair shore, 365
Whom Heaven, alas! decreed to meet no more.

Quick through the father's heart these accents ran;
Grief seiz'd at once, and wrapt up all the man;
Deep from his soul he sigh'd, and sorrowing spread
A cloud of ashes on his hoary head, 370
Trembling with agonies of strong delight
Stood the great son, heart-wounded with the sight:
He ran, he seiz'd him with a strict embrace,
With thousand kisses wander'd o'er his face,
I, I am he; O father rise, behold
Thy son, with twenty winters now grown old;
Thy son, so long desir'd, so long detain'd,
Restor'd, and breathing in his native land:
These floods of sorrow, O my fire, restrain!
The vengeance is complete; the suitor-train,
Stretch'd in our palace, by these hands lie slain. }

Amaz'd, Laertes: "Give some certain sign,
" (If such thou art) to manifest thee mine."
Lo here the wound (he cries) receiv'd of yore,
The scar indented by the tusky boar, 385
When by thyself and by Anticlea sent
To old Autolychus's realms I went.
Yet by another sign thy offspring know;
The several trees you gave me long ago,

While, yet a child, these fields I lov'd to trace,
 And trod thy foot-steps with unequal pace;
 To every plant in order as we came,
 Well-pleas'd you told its nature, and its name,
 Whate'er my childish fancy ask'd, bestow'd;
 Twelve pear trees bowing with their pendent load,
 And ten, that red with blushing apples glow'd;
 Full fifty purple figs; and many a row
 Of various vines that then began to blow,
 A future vintage! when the Hours produce
 Their latent buds, and Sol exalts the juice. 400

Smit with the signs, which all his doubts explain,
 His heart within him melts; his knees sustain
 Their feeble weight no more; his arms alone
 Support him, round the lov'd Ulysses thrown;
 He faints, he sinks, with mighty joys oppress'd: 405
 Ulysses clasps him to his eager breast.
 Soon as returning life regains its seat,
 And his breath lengthens, and his pulses beat;
 Yes, I believe (he cries) almighty Jove!
 Heaven rules us yet, and Gods there are above. 410
 'Tis so—the suitors for their wrongs have paid—
 But what shall guard us, if the town invade?
 If, while the news through every city flies,
 All Ithaca and Cephalenia rise?

To this Ulysses: As the Gods shall please 415
 Be all the rest; and set thy soul at ease.
 Haste to the cottage by this orchard side,
 And take the banquet which our cares provide:

There

There wait thy faithful band of rural friends,
And there the young Telemachus attends. 420

Thus having said, they trac'd the garden o'er,
And stooping enter'd at a lowly door.

The swains and young Telemachus they found,
The victim portion'd, and the goblet crown'd.

The hoary king, his old Sicilian maid 425
Perfum'd and wash'd, and gorgeously array'd.

Pallas attending gives his frame to shine
With awful port, and majesty divine;

His gazing son admires the god-like grace,
And air celestial dawning o'er his face. 430

What God, he cry'd, my father's form improves?
How high he treads, and how enlarg'd he moves!

Oh! would to all the deathless Powers on high,
Pallas and Jove, and him who gilds the sky!

(Reply'd the king elated with his praise) 435
My strength were still, as once in better days:

When the bold Cephalens the leaguer form'd,
And proud Nericus trembled as I storm'd.

Such were I now, not absent from your deed
When the last sun beheld the suitors bleed, 440

This arm had aided yours; this hand bestrown
Our floors with death, and push'd the slaughter on;

Nor had the fire been separate from the son. }
They commun'd thus; while homeward bent their
way

The swains, fatigu'd with labours of the day; 445

Dolius the first, the venerable man;
And next his sons, a long succeeding train.

For due refection to the bower they came;
 Call'd by the careful old Sicilian dame,
 Who nurs'd the children, and now tends the fire;
 They see their lord, they gaze, and they admire.
 On chairs and beds in order seated round,
 They share the gladsome board; the roofs resound.
 While thus Ulysses to his ancient friend:
 "Forbear your wonder, and the feast attend;
 "The rites have waited long." The chief commands
 Their loves in vain; old Dolius spreads his hands,
 Springs to his master with a warm embrace,
 And fastens kisses on his hands and face;
 Then thus broke out: Oh long, oh daily mourn'd!
 Beyond our hopes, and to our wish, return'd!
 Conducted sure by Heaven! for Heaven alone
 Could work this wonder: welcome to thy own!
 And joys and happiness attend thy throne!
 Who knows thy bless'd, thy wish'd return? Oh, say
 To the chaste Queen, shall we the news convey?
 Or hears she, and with blessings loads the day?

Dismiss that care, for to the royal bride
 Already is it known (the king reply'd,
 And straight resum'd his seat) while round him bows
 Each faithful youth, and breathes out ardent vows:
 Then all beneath their father take their place,
 Rank'd by their ages, and the banquet grace.

Now flying Fame the swift report had spread
 Through all the city, of the suitors dead.
 In throngs they rise, and to the palace crowd;
 Their sighs were many, and the tumult loud.

Weeping

Weeping they bear the mangled heaps of slain,
 Inhume the natives in their native plain,
 The rest in ships are wafted o'er the main.
 Then sad in council all the seniors sate,
 Frequent and full, assembled to debate.
 Amid the circle first Eupithes rose,
 Big was his eye with tears, his heart with woes :
 The bold Antinous was his age's pride, 485
 The first who by Ulysses' arrow dy'd.

Down his wan cheek the trickling torrent ran,
 As, mixing words with sighs, he thus began :
 Great deeds, O friends ! this wondrous man has
 wrought,

And mighty blessings to his country brought. 490
 With ships he parted and a numerous train,
 Those, and their ships, he bury'd in the main.
 Now he returns, and first essays his hand
 In the best blood of all his native land.
 Haste then, and ere to neighbouring Pyle he flies,
 Or sacred Elis, to procure supplies ;
 Arise (or ye for ever fall) arise !
 Shame to this age, and all that shall succeed !
 If unreveng'd your sons and brothers bleed.
 Prove that we live, by vengeance on his head, 500
 Or sink at once forgotten with the dead.

Here ceas'd he, but indignant tears let fall
 Spoke when he ceas'd : dumb sorrow touch'd them all.
 When from the palace to the wondering throng
 Sage Medon came, and Phemius came along 505
 (Restless and early sleep's soft bands they broke) ;
 And Medon first th' assembled chiefs bespoke :

Hear

Hear me, ye peers and elders of the land,
 Who deem this act the work of mortal hand;
 As o'er the heaps of death Ulysses strode, 510
 These eyes, these eyes beheld a present God,
 Who now before him, now beside him stood,
 Fought as he fought; and mark'd his way with blood:
 In vain old Mentor's form the God bely'd;
 'Twas Heaven that struck, and Heaven was on his side.

A sudden horror all th' assembly shook,
 When, slowly rising, Halitherses spoke:
 (Reverend and wise, whose comprehensive view
 At once the present and the future knew)

Me too ye fathers hear! from you proceed 520
 The ills ye mourn; your own the guilty deed.
 Ye gave your sons, your lawless sons, the rein
 (Oft' warn'd by Mentor and myself in vain);
 An absent hero's bed they sought to foil,
 An absent hero's wealth they made their spoil: 525
 Immoderate riot, and intemperate lust!
 Th' offence was great, the punishment was just.
 Weigh then my counsels in an equal scale,
 Nor rush to ruin—Justice will prevail.

His moderate words some better minds persuade:
 They part, and join him; but the number stay'd.
 They storm, they shout, with hasty frenzy fir'd,
 And second all Eupithes' rage inspir'd.
 They cast their limbs in brass; to arms they run;
 The broad effulgence blazes in the sun. 535
 Before the city, and in ample plain,
 They meet: Eupithes heads the frantic train.

Fierce for his son, he breathes his threats in air;
Fate hears them not, and Death attends him there.

This pass'd on earth, while in the realms above 549

Minerva thus to cloud-compelling Jove:

May I presume to search thy secret soul?

O Power supreme! O Ruler of the whole!

Say, hast thou doom'd to this divided state

Or peaceful amity, or stern debate?

Declare thy purpose; for thy will is Fate.

Is not thy thought my own? (the God replies

Who rolls the thunder o'er the vaulted skies)

Hath not long since thy knowing soul decreed,

The chief's return should make the guilty bleed?

'Tis done, and at thy will the Fates succeed.

Yet hear the issue: since Ulysses' hand

Has slain the suitors, Heaven shall bless the land.

None now the kindred of th' unjust shall own;

Forgot the slaughter'd brother, and the son:

Each future day increase of wealth shall bring,

And o'er the past, Oblivion stretch her wing.

Long shall Ulysses in his empire rest,

His people blessing, by his people bless'd,

Let all be peace—He said, and gave the nod

That binds the Fates; the sanction of the God:

And, prompt to execute th' eternal will,

Descended Pallas from th' Olympian hill.

Now sat Ulysses at the rural feast,

The rage of hunger and of thirst repress'd;

To watch the foe, a trusty spy he sent;

A son of Dolius on the message went,

Stood

Stood in the way, and at a glance beheld
 The foe approach, embattled on the field.
 With backward step he hastens to the bower, 570
 And tells the news. They arm with all their power.

Four friends alone Ulysses' cause embrace,
 And six were all the sons of Dolius' race :
 Old Dolius too his rusted arms put on ;
 And, still more old, in arms Laërtes shone. 575

Trembling with warmth, the hoary heroes stand,
 And brazen Panoply invests the band.

The opening gates at once their war display :
 Fierce they rush forth : Ulysses leads the way.

That moment joins them with celestial aid, 580
 In Mentor's form, the Jove-descended Maid :

The suffering hero felt his patient breast
 Swell with new joy, and thus his son address'd :

Behold, Telemachus ! (nor fear the sight)
 The brave embattled ; the grim front of fight ! 585

The valiant with the valiant must contend :
 Shame not the line whence glorious you descend,
 Wide o'er the world their martial fame was spread ;
 Regard thyself, the living, and the dead.

Thy eyes, great father ! on this battle cast, 590
 Shall learn from me Penelope was chaste.

So spoke Telemachus ! the gallant boy
 Good old Laertes heard with panting joy ;
 And, Bless'd ! thrice bless'd this happy day ! he cries,
 The day that shows me, ere I close my eyes, 595
 A son and grandson of th' Arcesian name
 Strive for fair virtue, and contest for fame !

Then

Then thus Minerva in Laertes' ear :

Son of Arceſius, reverend warrior, hear !

Jove and Jove's Daughter firſt implore in prayer, 600

Then, whirling high, diſcharge thy lance in air ;

She ſaid, infuſing courage with the word :

Jove and Jove's Daughter then the chief implor'd,

And, whirling high, diſmiſs'd the lance in air,

Full at Eupithes drove the deathful ſpear : 605

The braſs-cheek'd helmet opens to the wound ;

He falls, earth thunders, and his arms reſound.

Before the father and the conquering ſon

Heaps ruſh on heaps ; they fight, they drop, they run.

Now by the ſword, and now the javelin, fall 610

The rebel race, and death had ſwallow'd all ;

But from on high the blue-ey'd Virgin cry'd ;

Her awful voice detain'd the headlong tide.

" Forbear, ye nations ! your mad hands forbear

" From mutual ſlaughter : Peace deſcends to ſpare."

Fear ſhook the nations : at the voice divine,

They drop their javelins, and their rage reſign.

All ſcatter'd round their glittering weapons lie ;

Some fall to earth, and ſome confus'dly fly.

With dreadful ſhouts Ulyſſes pour'd along, 620

Swift as an eagle, as an eagle ſtrong.

But Jove's red arm the burning thunder aims ;

Before Minerva ſhot the livid flames ;

Blazing they fell, and at her feet expir'd :

Then ſtopp'd the Goddeſs, trembled, and retir'd. 625

Deſcended from the Gods ! Ulyſſes, ceaſe ;

Offend not Jove : obey, and give the peace.

So Pallas spoke: the mandate from above
 The king obey'd. The Virgin-seed of Jove,
 In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord,
 "And willing nations knew their lawful lord."

END OF THE ODYSSEY.

4 AP 54

CONCLUSION OF THE NOTES.

I MUST observe with what dignity Homer concludes the *Odyssey*: to honour his hero, he introduces two Deities, Jupiter and Pallas, who interest themselves in his cause: he then paints Ulysses in the boldest colours, as he rushes upon the enemy with the utmost intrepidity, and his courage is so ungovernable, that Jupiter is forced to restrain it with his thunder. It is usual for orators to reserve the strongest arguments for the conclusion, that they may leave them fresh upon the reader's memory; Homer uses the same conduct: he represents his hero in all his terror, he shews him to be irresistible, and by this method leaves us fully possessed with a noble idea of his magnanimity.

It has been already observed, that the end of the action of the *Odyssey* is the re-establishment of Ulysses in full peace and tranquillity; this is not effected, till the defeat of the suitors' friends: and, therefore, if the poet had concluded before this event, the *Odyssey* had been imperfect. It was necessary that the reader should not only be informed of the return of Ulysses to his country, and the punishment of the suitors, but of his re-establishment, by a peaceful possession of his regal authority; which is not executed, till these last disorders raised by Eupithes are settled by the victory of Ulysses; and, therefore, this is the natural conclusion of the action.

This Book opens with the morning, and ends before night, so that the whole story of the *Odyssæy* is comprehended in the compass of one and forty days. Monsieur Dacier upon Aristotle remarks, that an Epic Poem ought not to be too long: we should be able to retain all the several parts of it at once in our memory: if we lose the idea of the beginning when we come to the conclusion, it is an argument that it is of too large an extent, and its length destroys its beauty. What seems to favour this decision is, that the *Æneid*, *Hiad*, and *Odyssæy*, are conformable to this rule of Aristotle; and every one of those poems may be read in the compass of a single day.

I have now gone through the collections upon the *Odyssæy*, and laid together what occurred most remarkable in this excellent Poem. I am not so vain as to think these remarks free from faults, nor so disingenuous as not to confess them: all writers have occasion for indulgence, and those most who least acknowledge it. I have sometimes used Madam Dacier as she as done others, in transcribing some of her remarks without particularizing them; but, indeed, it was through inadvertency only that her name is sometimes omitted at the bottom of the note. If my performance has merit, either in these, or in my part of the Translation, (namely, in the sixth, eleventh, and eighteenth books) it is but just to attribute it to the judgment and care of Mr. Pope, by whose hand every sheet was corrected. His other, and much more able assistant, was Mr. Fenton, in the fourth and the twenty-

tieth books. It was our particular request, that our several parts might not be made known to the world till the end of it: and if they have had the good fortune not to be distinguished from his, we ought to be the less vain, since the resemblance proceeds much less from our diligence and study to copy his manner, than from his own daily revision and correction. The most experienced painters will not wonder at this, who very well know, that no critick can pronounce even of the pieces of Raphael or Titian, which have, or which have not, been worked upon by those of their school; when the same master's hand has directed the execution of the whole, reduced it to one character and colouring, gone over the several parts, and given to each their finishing.

I must not conclude without declaring our mutual satisfaction in Mr. Pope's acceptance of our best endeavours, which have contributed at least to his more speedy execution of this great undertaking. If ever my name be numbered with the learned, I must ascribe it to his friendship, in transmitting it to posterity by a participation in his labours. May the sense I have of this, and other instances of that friendship, be known as long as his name will cause mine to last: and may I to this end be permitted, at the conclusion of a work, which is a kind of monument of his partiality to me, to place the following lines, as an inscription memorial of it:

LET vulgar souls triumphal arches raise,
 Or speaking marbles, to record their praise;
 And picture (to the voice of Fame unknown)
 The mimic feature on the breathing stone:
 Mere mortals! subject to death's total sway,
 Reptiles of earth, and beings of a day!

'Tis thine, on every heart to grave thy praise,
 A monument which worth alone can raise:
 Sure to survive, when time shall whelm in dust
 The arch, the marble, and the mimic bust:
 Nor, till the volumes of th' expanded sky
 Blaze in one flame, shalt thou and Homer die:
 Then sink together, in the world's last fires,
 What Heaven created, and what Heaven inspires.

If aught on earth, when once this breath is fled,
 With human transport touch the mighty dead:
 Shakespeare, rejoice! his hand thy page refines;
 Now every scene with native brightness shines;
 Just to thy fame, he gives thy genuine thought;
 So Tully publish'd what Lucretius wrote;
 Prun'd by his care thy laurels loftier grow,
 And bloom afresh on thy immortal brow.

Thus when thy draughts, O Raphael! time invades,
 And the bold figure from the canvas fades,
 A rival hand recalls from every part
 Some latent grace, and equals art with art:
 Transported we survey the dubious strife,
 While each fair image starts again to life.

How

How long, untun'd, had Homer's sacred lyre
 Jarr'd grating discord, all-extinct his fire !
 This you beheld ; and, taught by Heaven to sing,
 Call'd the loud music from the sounding string.
 Now wak'd from slumbers of three thousand years,
 Once more Achilles in dread pomp appears,
 Towers o'er the field of death ; as fierce he turns,
 Keen flash his arms, and all the hero burns ;
 With martial stalk, and more than mortal might,
 He strides along, and meets the Gods in fight :
 Then the pale Titans, chain'd on burning floors,
 Start at the din that rends th' infernal shores ;
 Tremble the towers of Heaven, earth rocks her coasts,
 And gloomy Pluto shakes with all his ghosts.
 To every theme responds thy various lay ;
 Here rolls a torrent, there Meanders play ;
 Sonorous as the storm thy numbers rise,
 Toss the wild waves, and thunder in the skies ;
 Or softer than a yielding virgin's sigh,
 The gentle breezes breathe away and die.
 Thus, like the radiant God who sheds the day,
 You paint the vale, or gild the azure way ;
 And, while with every theme the verse complies,
 Sink without groveling, without rashness rise.

Proceed, great Bard ! awake th' harmonious string,
 Be ours all Homer ! still Ulysses sing.
 How long* that hero by unskilful hands,
 Stripp'd of his robes, a beggar trod our lands :
 Such as he wander'd o'er his native coast,
 Shrunk by the wand, and all the warrior lost ?

262. CONCLUSION OF THE NOTES.

O'er his smooth skin a bark of wrinkles spread ;
 Old age disgrac'd the honours of his head ;
 Nor longer in his heavy eye-ball shin'd
 The glance divine, forth-beaming from the mind.
 But you, like Pallas, every limb infold
 With royal robes, and bid him shine in gold ;
 Touch'd by your hand, his manly frame improves
 With grace divine, and like a God he moves.

Ev'n I, the meanest of the Muses train,
 Inflam'd by thee, attempt a nobler strain ;
 Adventurous waken the Mæonian lyre,
 Tun'd by your hand, and sing as you inspire ;
 So, arm'd by great Achilles for the fight,
 Patroclus conquer'd in Achilles' right ;
 Like their's, our friendship ! and I boast my name
 To thine united—For thy FRIENDSHIP'S FAME.

This labour past, of heavenly subjects sing,
 While hovering angels listen on the wing,
 To hear from earth, such heart-felt raptures rise,
 As, when they sing, suspended hold the skies :
 Or, nobly rising in fair Virtue's cause,
 From thy own life transcribe th' unerring laws ;
 Teach a bad world beneath her sway to bend ;
 To verse like thine fierce savages attend,
 And men more fierce : when Orpheus tunes the lay,
 Ev'n fiends relenting hear their rage away.

W. BROOME

POSTSCRIPT.

BY MR. POPE.

I CANNOT dismiss this Work without a few observations on the character and style of it. Whoever reads the *Odyſſey* with an eye to the *Iliad*, expecting to find it of the ſame character, or of the ſame ſort of ſpirit, will be grievouſly deceived, and err againſt the firſt principle of criticiſm, which is, to conſider the nature of the piece, and the intent of its author. The *Odyſſey* is a moral and political work, inſtructive to all degrees of men, and filled with images, examples, and precepts of civil and domeſtic life. Homer is here a perſon,

“ Qui didicit, patriæ quid debeat, & quid amicis,

“ Quo ſit amore parens, quo frater amandus, & hoſpes :

“ Qui quid ſit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid

“ non,

“ Plenius & melius Chryſippo & Crantore dicit.”

The *Odyſſey* is the reverse of the *Iliad*, in moral, ſubject, manner, and ſtyle; to which it has no ſort of relation, but as the ſtory happens to follow in order of time, and as ſome of the ſame perſons are actors in it.

Yet from this incidental connexion many have been misled to regard it as a continuation or second part, and thence to expect a parity of character inconsistent with its nature.

It is no wonder that the common reader should fall into this mistake, when so great a critick as Longinus seems not wholly free from it; although what he has said has been generally understood to import a severer censure of the *Odyssæy* than it really does, if we consider the occasion on which it is introduced, and the circumstances to which it is confined.

“ The *Odyssæy* (says he) is an instance, how natural it is to a great genius, when it begins to grow old and decline, to delight itself in narrations and fables. For that Homer composed the *Odyssæy* after the *Iliad*, many proofs may be given, &c. From hence, in my judgment, it proceeds, that as the *Iliad* was written while his spirit was in its greatest vigour, the whole structure of that work is dramatic and full of action; whereas the greater part of the *Odyssæy* is employed in narration, which is the taste of old age: so that in this latter piece we may compare him to the setting sun, which has still the same greatness, but not the same ardour, or force. He speaks not in the same strain; we see no more that sublime of the *Iliad*, which marches on with a constant pace, without ever being stopped, or retarded: there appears no more that hurry, and that strong tide of motions and passions, pouring one after another: there is no more the same fury,

“ or

“ on the same volubility of diction, so suitable to ac-
 “ tion, and all along drawing in such innumerable
 “ images of nature. But Homer, like the ocean, is
 “ always great; even when he ebbs and retires; even
 “ when he is lowest, and loses himself most in narra-
 “ tions and incredible fictions: as instances of this, we
 “ cannot forget the descriptions of tempests, the ad-
 “ ventures of Ulysses with the Cyclops, and many
 “ others. But, though all this be age, it is the age
 “ of Homer. And it may be said for the credit of these
 “ fictions, that they are beautiful dreams, or, if you
 “ will, the dreams of Jupiter himself. I spoke of the
 “ Odyssey only to shew, that the greatest poets, when
 “ their genius wants strength and warmth for the pa-
 “ thetic, for the most part employ themselves in paint-
 “ ing the manners. This Homer has done in charac-
 “ terising the suitors, and describing their way of life:
 “ which is properly a branch of comedy, whose pecu-
 “ liar business it is to represent the manners of men.”

We must first observe, it is the sublime of which
 Longinus is writing: that, and not the nature of Ho-
 mer's poem, is his subject. After having highly ex-
 tolled the fire and sublimity of the Iliad, he justly
 observes the Odyssey to have less of those qualities, and
 to turn more on the side of moral, and reflections on
 human life. Nor is it his business here to determine,
 whether the elevated spirit of the one, or the just moral
 of the other, be the greater excellence in itself.

Secondly, that fire and fury, of which he is speaking,
 cannot well be meant of the general spirit and inspira-
 tion

tion which is to run through a whole Epick poem, but of that particular warmth and impetuosity necessary in some parts, to image or represent actions or passions of haste, tumult, and violence. It is on occasion of citing some such particular passages in Homer, that Longinus breaks into this reflection; which seems to determine his meaning chiefly to that sense.

Upon the whole, he affirms the *Odyssy* to have less sublimity and fire than the *Iliad*; but he does not say it wants the sublime, or wants fire. He affirms it to be narrative, but not that the narration is defective. He affirms it to abound in fictions, not that those fictions are ill invented, or ill executed. He affirms it to be nice and particular in painting the manners, but not that those manners are ill painted. If Homer has fully in these points accomplished his own design, and done all that the nature of his poem demanded or allowed, it still remains perfect in its kind, and as much a masterpiece as the *Iliad*.

The amount of the passage is this; that in his own particular taste, and with respect to the sublime, Longinus preferred the *Iliad*: and because the *Odyssy* was less active and lofty, he judged it the work of the old age of Homer.

If this opinion be true, it will only prove, that Homer's age might determine him in the choice of his subject, not that it affected him in the execution of it: and that which would be a very wrong instance to prove the decay of his imagination, is a very good one to evince the strength of his judgement. For had he (as

Madam

Madam Dacier observes) composed the *Odyſſey* in his youth, and the *Iliad* in his age, both muſt in reaſon have been exactly the ſame as they now ſtand. To blame Homer for his choice of ſuch a ſubject, as did not admit the ſame incidents and the ſame pomp of ſtyle as his former, is to take offence at too much variety, and to imagine, that when a man has written one good thing, he muſt ever after only copy himſelf.

The *Battle of Conſtantine*, and the *School of Athens*, are both pieces of Raphael: ſhall we cenſure the *School of Athens* as faulty, becauſe it has not the fury and fire of the other? or ſhall we ſay, that Raphael was grown grave and old, becauſe he choſe to repreſent the manners of old men and philoſophers? There is all the ſilence, tranquillity, and compoſure in the one, and all the warmth, hurry, and tumult in the other, which the ſubject of either required: both of them had been imperfect, if they had not been as they are. And let the poet or painter be young or old, who deſigns or performs in this manner, it proves him to have made the piece at a time of life when he was maſter not only of his art, but of his diſcretion.

Ariſtotle makes no ſuch diſtinction between the two poems: he conſtantly cites them with equal praiſe, and draws the rules and examples of *Epick* writing equally from both. But it is rather to the *Odyſſey* that Horace gives the preference, in the *Epistle to Lollius*, and in the *Art of Poetry*. It is remarkable how oppoſite his opinion is to that of Longinus; and that the particulars he chooſes to extol, are thoſe very fictions, and pictures

tures of the manners which the other seems least to approve. Those fables and manners are of the very essence of the work: but even without that regard, the fables themselves have both more invention and more instruction; and the manners more moral and example, than those of the *Iliad*.

In some points (and these the most essential to the *Epick* poem) the *Odyssey* is confessed to excel the *Iliad*; and principally in the great end of it, the moral. The conduct, turn, and disposition of the fable is also what the critics allow to be the better model for *Epick* writers to follow: accordingly we find much more of the cast of this poem than of the other in the *Æneid*, and (what next to that is perhaps the greatest example) in the *Telemachus*. In the manners, it is no way inferior: Longinus is so far from finding any defect in these, that he rather taxes Homer with painting them too minutely. As to the narrations, although they are more numerous as the occasions are more frequent, yet they carry no more the marks of old age, and are neither more prolix, nor more circumstantial, than the conversations and dialogues of the *Iliad*. Not to mention the length of those of Phoenix in the ninth book, and of Nestor in the eleventh (which may be thought in compliance to their characters), those of Glaucus in the sixth, of *Æneas* in the twentieth, and some others, must be allowed to exceed any in the whole *Odyssey*. And that the propriety of style, and the numbers, in the narrations of each are equal, will appear to any who compare them.

To

To form a right judgment, whether the genius of Homer had suffered any decay; we must consider, in both his poems, such parts as are of a similar nature, and will bear comparison. And it is certain we shall find in each the same vivacity and fecundity of invention, the same life and strength of imaging and colouring, the particular descriptions as highly painted, the figures as bold, the metaphors as animated, and the numbers as harmonious, and as various.

The *Odyssey* is a perpetual source of poetry: the stream is not the less full, for being gentle; though it is true (when we speak only with regard to the sublime) that a river, foaming and thundering in cataracts from rocks and precipices, is what more strikes, amazes, and fills the mind, than the same body of water, flowing afterwards through peaceful vales and agreeable scenes of pasturage.

The *Odyssey* (as I have before said) ought to be considered according to its own nature and design, not with an eye to the *Iliad*. To censure Homer, because it is unlike what it was never meant to resemble, is as if a gardener, who had purposely cultivated two beautiful trees of contrary natures, as a specimen of his skill in the several kinds, should be blamed for not bringing them into pairs; when in root, stem, leaf, and flower, each was so entirely different, that one must have been spoiled in the endeavour to match the other.

Longinus, who saw this poem was “partly of the nature of comedy,” ought not, for that very reason, to have considered it with a view to the *Iliad*. How little

little any such resemblance was the intention of Homer, may appear from hence, that, although the character of Ulysses was there already drawn, yet here he purposely turns to another side of it, and shows him not in that full light of glory, but in the shade of common life, with a mixture of such qualities as are requisite to all the lowest accidents of it, struggling with misfortunes, and on a level with the meanest of mankind. As for the other persons, none of them are above what we call the higher comedy: Calypso, though a Goddess, is a character of intrigue; the suitors yet more approaching to it; the Phæacians are of the same cast; the Cyclops, Melanthius, and Irus, descend even to droll characters; and the scenes that appear throughout are generally of the comic kind; banquets, revels, sports, loves, and the pursuit of a woman.

From the nature of the poem, we shall form an idea of the style. The diction is to follow the images, and to take its colour from the complexion of the thoughts. Accordingly the *Odyssey* is not always cloathed in the majesty of verse proper to tragedy, but sometimes descends into the plainer narrative, and sometimes even to that familiar dialogue essential to comedy. However, where it cannot support a sublimity, it always preserves a dignity, or at least a propriety.

There is a real beauty in an easy, pure, perspicuous description, even of a low action. There are numerous instances of this both in Homer and Virgil: and, perhaps, those natural passages are not the least pleasing of their works. It is often the same in history, where the
repre-

representations of common, or even domestic things, in clear, plain, and natural words, are frequently found to make the liveliest impression on the reader.

The question is, how far a poet, in pursuing the description or image of an action, can attach himself to little circumstances, without vulgarity or trifling? what particulars are proper, and enliven the image; or what are impertinent, and clog it? In this matter painting is to be consulted, and the whole regard had to those circumstances which contribute to form a full, and yet not a confused, idea of a thing.

Epithets are of vast service to this effect, and the right use of these is often the only expedient to render the narration poetical.

The great point of judgment is to distinguish when to speak simply, and when figuratively: but whenever the poet is obliged by the nature of his subject to descend to the lower manner of writing, an elevated style would be affected, and therefore ridiculous; and the more he was forced upon figures and metaphors to avoid that lowness, the more the image would be broken, and consequently obscure.

One may add, that the use of the grand style on little subjects, is not only ludicrous, but a sort of transgression against the rules of proportion and mechanicks: it is using a vast force to lift a feather.

I believe, now I am upon this head, it will be found a just observation, That the low actions of life cannot be put into a figurative style, without being ridiculous; but things natural can. Metaphors raise the latter into
dignity,

dignity, as we see in the Georgicks : but throw the former into ridicule, as in the Lutrín. I think this may very well be accounted for: laughter implies censure; inanimate and irrational beings are not objects of censure; therefore they may be elevated as much as you please, and no ridicule follows: but when rational beings are represented above their real character, it becomes ridiculous in art, because it is vicious in morality. The bees in Virgil, were they rational beings, would be ridiculous by having their actions and manners represented on a level with creatures so superior as men; since it would imply folly or pride, which are the proper objects of ridicule.

The use of pompous expression for low actions or thoughts is the true sublime of Don Quixote. How far unfit it is for Epick Poetry, appears in its being the perfection of the mock Epick. It is so far from being the sublime of Tragedy, that it is the cause of all bombast; when poets, instead of being (as they imagine) constantly lofty, only preserve throughout a painful equality of fustian: that continued swell of language (which runs indiscriminately even through their lowest characters, and rattles like some mightiness of meaning in the most indifferent subjects) is of a piece with that perpetual elevation of tone which the players have learned from it; and which is not speaking, but vociferating.

There is still more reason for a variation of style in Epick poetry than in tragic, to distinguish between that language of the Gods proper to the Muse who sings, and is inspired: and that of men, who are introduced
speaking

speaking only according to nature. Further, there ought to be a difference of style observed in the speeches of human persons, and those of Deities; and again, in those which may be called set harangues, or orations, and those which are only conversation or dialogue. Homer has more of the latter than any other poet: what Virgil does by two or three words of narration, Homer still performs by speeches: not only replies, but even rejoinders are frequent in him, a practice almost unknown to Virgil. This renders his poems more animated, but less grave and majestic; and consequently necessitates the frequent use of a lower style. The writers of Tragedy lie under the same necessity, if they would copy nature; whereas that painted and poetical diction, which they perpetually use, would be improper even in orations designed to move with all the arts of rhetoric: this is plain from the practice of Demosthenes and Cicero; and Virgil in those of Drances and Turnus gives an eminent example, how far removed the style of them ought to be from such an excess of figures and ornaments; which indeed fits only that language of the Gods we have been speaking of, or that of a Muse under inspiration.

To read through a whole work in this strain, is like travelling all along the ridge of a hill; which is not half so agreeable as sometimes gradually to rise, and sometimes gently to descend, as the way leads, and as the end of the journey directs.

Indeed the true reason that so few poets have imitated Homer in these lower parts, has been the extreme dif-

ficulty of preserving that mixture of ease and dignity essential to them. For it is as hard for an Epick poem to stoop to the narrative with success, as for a prince to descend to be familiar, without diminution to his greatness.

The sublime style is more easily counterfeited than the natural; something that passes for it, or sounds like it, is common in all false writers: but nature, purity, perspicuity, and simplicity, never walk in the clouds; they are obvious to all capacities; and where they are not evident, they do not exist.

The most plain narration not only admits of these, and of harmony, (which are all the qualities of style) but it requires every one of them to render it pleasing. On the contrary, whatever pretends to a share of the sublime, may pass, notwithstanding any defects in the rest; nay, sometimes without any of them, and gain the admiration of all ordinary readers.

Homer, in his lowest narrations or speeches, is ever easy, flowing, copious, clear, and harmonious. He shows not less invention, in assembling the humbler, than the greater, thoughts and images; nor less judgment, in proportioning the style and the versification to these, than to the other. Let it be remembered, that the same genius that soared the highest, and from whom the greatest models of the sublime are divided, was also he who stooped the lowest, and gave to the simple narrative its utmost perfection. Which of these was the harder task to Homer himself I cannot pretend to determine; but to his translator I can affirm (however unequal

unequal all his imitations must be) that of the latter has been more difficult.

Whoever expects here the same pomp of verse, and the same ornaments of diction, as in the Iliad, he will, and he ought to be, disappointed. Were the original otherwise, it had been an offence against nature; and were the translation so, it were an offence against Homer, which is the same thing.

It must be allowed that there is a majesty and harmony in the Greek language, which greatly contribute to elevate and support the narration. But I must also observe, that this is an advantage grown upon the language since Homer's time: for things are removed from vulgarity by being out of use; and if the words we could find in any present language were equally sonorous or musical in themselves, they would still appear less poetical and uncommon than those of a dead one, from this only circumstance, of being in every man's mouth. I may add to this another disadvantage to a translator, from a different cause: Homer seems to have taken upon him the character of an historian, antiquary, divine, and professor of arts and sciences, as well as a poet. In one or other of these characters he descends into many particularities, which as a poet only perhaps he would have avoided. All these ought to be preserved by a faithful translator, who in some measure takes the place of Homer; and all that can be expected from him is to make them as poetical as the subject will bear. Many arts therefore are requisite to supply these disadvantages, in order to dignify and so-

lemnize these plainer parts, which hardly admit of any poetical ornaments.

Some use has been made to this end of the style of Milton. A just and moderate mixture of old words may have an effect like the working of old abbey stones into a building, which I have sometimes seen, to give a kind of venerable air, and yet not destroy the neatness, elegance, and equality, requisite to a new work; I mean, without rendering it too unfamiliar, or remote from the present purity of writing, or from that ease and smoothness which ought always to accompany narration or dialogue. In reading a style judiciously antiquated, one finds a pleasure not unlike that of travelling on an old Roman way: but then the road must be as good, as the way is ancient; the style must be such in which we may evenly proceed, without being put to short stops by sudden abruptnesses, or puzzled by frequent turnings and transpositions. No man delights in furrows and stumbling-blocks: and let our love to antiquity be ever so great, a fine ruin is one thing, and a heap of rubbish another. The imitators of Milton, like most other imitators, are not copies but caricatura's of their original; they are a hundred times more obsolete and cramp than he, and equally so in all places: whereas it should have been observed of Milton, that he is not lavish of his exotic words and phrases every where alike, but employs them much more where the subject is marvellous, vast, and strange, as in the scenes of heaven, hell, chaos, &c. than where it is turned to the natural and agreeable, as in the

the pictures of Paradise, the loves of our first parents, entertainments of angels, and the like. In general, this unusual style better serves to awaken our ideas in the descriptions and in the imaging and picturesque parts, than it agrees with the lower sort of narrations, the character of which is simplicity and purity. Milton has several of the latter, where we find not an antiquated, affected, or uncouth word, for some hundred lines together; as in his fifth book, the latter part of the eighth, the former of the tenth and eleventh books, and in the narration of Michael in the twelfth. I wonder indeed that he, who ventured (contrary to the practice of all other Epick poets) to imitate Homer's lowlinesses in the narrative, should not also have copied his plainness and perspicuity in the dramatick parts: since in his speeches (where clearness above all is necessary) there is frequently such transposition and forced construction, that the very sense is not to be discovered without a second or third reading: and in this certainly he ought to be no example.

To preserve the true character of Homer's style in the present translation, great pains have been taken to be easy and natural. The chief merit I can pretend to, is, not to have been carried into a more plausible and figurative manner of writing, which would better have pleased all readers, but the judicious ones. My errors had been fewer, had each of those gentlemen who joined with me shewn as much of the severity of a friend to me, as I did to them, in a strict animadversion and correction. What assistance I received from

them, was made known in general to the publick in the original propofals for this work, and the particulars are fpecified at the conclufion of it; to which, I muft add (to be punctually juft) fome part of the tenth and fifteenth books. The reader will now be too good a judge, how much the greater part of it, and confequently of its faults, is chargeable upon me alone. But this I can with integrity affirm, that I have beftowed as much time and pains upon the whole, as were confiftent with the indifpensable duties and cares of life, and with that wretched ftate of health which God has been pleafed to make my portion. At leaft, it is a pleafure to me to reflect, that I have introduced into our language this other work of the greateft and moft ancient of poets, with fome dignity; and I hope, with a little difadvantage as the *Iliad*. And if, after the unmerited fuccefs of that tranflation, any one will wonder why I would enterprize the *Odyssey*; I think it fufficient to fay, that Homer himfelf did the fame, or the world would never have feen it.

I defigned to have ended this poftfcript here: but fince I am now taking my leave of Homer, and of all controverfy relating to him, I beg leave to be indulged if I make ufe of this laft opportunity to fay a very few words about fome reflections which the late Madam Dacier beftowed on the firft part of my preface to the *Iliad*, and which ſhe publifhed at the end of her tranflation of that poem *.

To write gravely an answer to them, would be too much

* Second edition, à Paris, 1719.

much for the reflections ; and to say nothing concerning them, would be too little for the author. It is owing to the industry of that learned lady, that our polite neighbours are become acquainted with many of Homer's beauties, which were hidden from them before in Greek and in Eutathius. She challenges on this account a particular regard from all the admirers of that great poet ; and I hope that I shall be thought, as I mean, to pay some part of this debt to her memory in what I am now writing.

Had these reflections fallen from the pen of an ordinary critick, I should not have apprehended their effect, and should therefore have been silent concerning them : but since they are Madam Dacier's, I imagine that they must be of weight ; and in a case where I think her reasoning very bad, I respect her authority.

I have fought under Madam Dacier's banner, and have waged war in defence of the divine Homer against all the hereticks of the age. And yet it is Madam Dacier who accuses me, and who accuses me of nothing less than betraying our common cause. She affirms that the most declared enemies of this author have never said any thing against him more injurious or more unjust than I. What must the world think of me, after such a judgment passed by so great a critick ; the world, who decides so often, and who examines so seldom ; the world, who even in matters of literature is almost always the slave of authority ? Who will suspect that so much learning should mistake, that so much accuracy should be misled, or that so much candour should be biased ?

All this however has happened; and Madam Dacier's criticisms on my preface flow from the very same error, from which so many false criticisms of her countrymen upon Homer have flowed, and which she has so justly and so severely reprov'd; I mean, the error of depending on injurious and unskilful translations.

An indifferent translation may be of some use, and a good one will be of a great deal. But I think that no translation ought to be the ground of criticism, because no man ought to be condemned upon another man's explanation of his meaning: could Homer have had the honour of explaining his, before that august tribunal where Monsieur de la Motte presides, I make no doubt but he had escaped many of those severe animadversions with which some French authors have loaded him, and from which even Madam Dacier's translation of the Iliad could not preserve him.

How unhappy was it for me, that the knowledge of our island-tongue was as necessary to Madam Dacier in my case, as the knowledge of Greek was to Monsieur de la Motte in that of our great author; or to any of those whom she styles blind censurers, and blames for condemning what they did not understand.

I may say with modesty, that she knew less of my true sense from that faulty translation of part of my preface, than those blind censurers might have known of Homer's even from the translation of La Valterie, which preceded her own.

It pleased me however to find, that her objections were not levelled at the general doctrine, or at any essentials of my preface, but only at a few particular expressions. She proposed little more than (to use her own phrase) to combat two or three similes; and I hope that to combat a simile is no more than to fight with a shadow, since a simile is no better than the shadow of an argument.

She lays much weight where I laid but little, and examines with more scrupulosity than I writ, or than perhaps the matter requires.

These unlucky similes taken by themselves may perhaps render my meaning equivocal to an ignorant translator; or there may have fallen from my pen some expressions, which, taken by themselves likewise, may to the same person have the same effect. But if the translator had been master of our tongue, the general tenor of my argument, that which precedes and that which follows the passages objected to, would have sufficiently determined him as to the precise meaning of them: and if Madam Dacier had taken up her pen a little more leisurely, or had employed it with more temper, she would not have answered paraphrases of her own, which even the translation will not justify, and which say, more than once, the very contrary to what I have said in the passages themselves.

If any person has curiosity enough to read the whole paragraphs in my preface, or some mangled parts of which these reflections are made, he will easily discern that I am as orthodox as Madam Dacier herself in those very articles on which she treats me like an heretick:

he will easily see that all the difference between us consists in this, that I offer opinions, and she delivers doctrines; that my imagination represents Homer as the greatest of human poets, whereas in hers he was exalted above humanity; infallibility and impeccability were two of his attributes. There was therefore no need of defending Homer against me, who, (if I mistake not) had carried my admiration of him as far as it can be carried, without giving a real occasion of writing in his defence.

After answering my harmless similes, she proceeds to a matter which does not regard so much the honour of Homer, as that of the times he lived in; and here I must confess she does not wholly mistake my meaning, but I think she mistakes the state of the question. She had said, the manners of those times were so much the better, the less they were like ours. I thought this required a little qualification. I confessed that in my opinion the world was mended in some points, such as the custom of putting whole nations to the sword, condemning kings and their families to perpetual slavery, and a few others. Madam Dacier judges otherwise in this; but as to the rest, particularly in preferring the simplicity of the ancient world to the luxury of ours, which is the main point contended for, she owns we agree. This I thought was well; but I am so unfortunate that this too is taken amiss, and called adopting or (if you will) stealing her sentiment. The truth is, she might have said her words, for I used them on purpose, being then professedly citing from her: though
I might

I might have done the same without intending that compliment, for they are also to be found in Eustathius, and the sentiment I believe is that of all mankind. I cannot really tell what to say to this whole remark; only that in the first part of it, Madam Dacier is displeased that I do not agree with her, and in the last that I do: but this is a temper which every polite man should over-look in a lady.

To punish my ingratitude, she resolves to expose my blunders, and selects two which I suppose are the most flagrant, out of the many for which she could have chastised me. It happens that the first of these is in part the translator's, and in part her own, without any share of mine: she quotes the end of a sentence, and he puts in French what I never wrote in English: "Homer (I said) opened a new and boundless walk for his imagination, and created a world for himself in the invention of fable;" which he translates, *Homere crea pour son usage un monde mouvant, en inventant la fable.*

Madam Dacier justly wonders at this nonsense in me; and I, in the translator. As to what I meant by Homer's invention of fable, it is afterwards particularly distinguished from that extensive sense in which she took it, by these words. "If Homer was not the first who introduced the Deities (as Herodotus imagines) into the religion of Greece, he seems the first who brought them into a system of machinery for poetry."

The other blunder she accuses me of is, the mistaking a passage in Aristotle, and she is pleased to send

me back to this philosopher's treatise of Poetry, and to her preface on the *Odyſſey*, for my better instruction. Now though I am ſaucy enough to think that one may ſometimes differ from Aristotle without blundering, and though I am ſure one may ſometimes fall into an error by following him ſervilely; yet I own, that to quote any author for what he never ſaid, is a blunder; (but, by the way, to correct an author for what he never ſaid, is ſomewhat worſe than a blunder.) My words were theſe: "As there is a greater variety of characters in the *Iliad* than in any other poem, ſo there is of ſpeeches. Every thing in it has manners, as Aristotle expreſſes it; that is, every thing is acted or ſpoken: very little paſſes in narration." She juſtly ſays, that "Every thing which is acted or ſpoken, has not neceſſarily manners merely becauſe it is acted or ſpoken." Agreed: but I would aſk the queſtion, whether any thing can have manners which is neither acted nor ſpoken? If not, then the whole *Iliad* being almoſt ſpent in ſpeech and action, almoſt every thing in it has manners, ſince Homer has been proved before, in a long paragraph of the preface, to have excelled in drawing characters and painting manners, and indeed his whole poem is one continued occaſion of ſhewing this bright part of his talent.

To ſpeak fairly, it is impoſſible ſhe could read even the tranſlation, and take my ſenſe ſo wrong as ſhe repreſents it; but I was firſt tranſlated ignorantly, and then read partially. My expreſſion indeed was not quite exact; it ſhould have been, "Every thing has manners as Aristotle calls them." But ſuch a fault methinks might have been ſpared, ſince if one was to
look

look with that disposition she discovers towards me, even on her own excellent writings, one might find some mistakes which no context can redress; as where she makes Eustathius call Cratisthenes the Phliasian, Callisthenes the Physician *. What a triumph might some slips of this sort have afforded to Homer's, hers, and my enemies, from which she was only screened by their happy ignorance! How unlucky had it been, when she insulted Mr. de la Motte for omitting a material passage in the † speech of Helen to Hector, Iliad vi. if some champion for the moderns had by chance understood so much Greek, as to whisper him, that there was no such passage in Homer?

Our concern, zeal, and even jealousy, for our great author's honour were mutual, our endeavours to advance it were equal, and I have as often trembled for it in her hands, as she could in mine. It was one of the many reasons I had to wish the longer life of this lady, that I must certainly have regained her good opinion, in spite of all misrepresenting translators whatever. I could not have expected it on any other terms than being approved as great, if not as passionate, an admirer of Homer as herself. For that was the first condition of her favour and friendship; otherwise not one's taste alone, but one's morality had been corrupted, nor would any man's religion have been suspected, who did not implicitly believe in an author whose doctrine is so conformable to Holy Scripture. However, as different people have different ways of expressing their belief, some purely by public and general acts

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* Dacier Remarques sur le 4me livre de l'Odyss. p. 476.

† De la Corruption du Gout.

of worship, others by a reverend sort of reasoning and enquiry about the grounds of it; it is the same in admiration, some prove it by exclamations, others by respect. I have observed that the loudest huzzas given to a great man in triumph, proceed not from his friends, but the rabble; and as I have fancied it the same with the rabble of critics, a desire to be distinguished from them has turned me to the more moderate, and, I hope, more rational method. Though I am a poet, I would not be an enthusiast; and though I am an Englishman, I would not be furiously of a party. I am far from thinking myself that genius, upon whom, at the end of these remarks, Madam Dacier congratulates my country: one capable of, "correcting Homer, and consequently of reforming mankind, and amending this constitution." It was not to Great Britain this ought to have been applied, since our nation has one happiness for which she might have preferred it to her own, that, as much as we abound in other miserable misguided sects, we have at least none of the blasphemers of Homer. We steadfastly and unanimously believe, both his poem, and our constitution, to be the best that ever human wit invented; that the one is not more incapable of amendment than the other; and (old as they both are) we despise any French or Englishman whatever, who shall presume to retrench, to innovate, or to make the least alteration in either. Far therefore from the genius for which Madam Dacier mistook me, my whole desire is but to preserve the humble character of a faithful translator, and a quiet subject.

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